

SEPTEMBER 1962

Commentary

THE PAPER ECONOMY

by DAVID T. BAZELON

THE JEWISH FUTURE IN ALGERIA: Jean Daniel

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 30's: William Phillips

YENTL THE YESHIVA BOY—A Story: Isaac Bashevis Singer

SCHOOL PRAYERS & THE FOUNDING FATHERS: Leonard W. Levy

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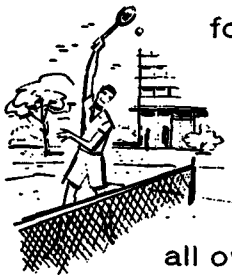
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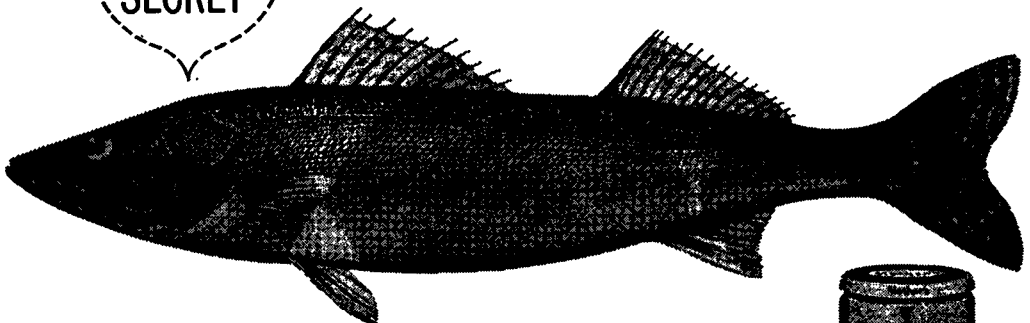
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Commentary

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THE PAPER ECONOMY

DAVID T. BAZELON

In time, immutable rules of conduct enforced under progressively changing conditions should logically result in a muddle.
—Thorstein Veblen

THERE ARE IMMENSE changes under way in our social economy, as everybody senses; but through this whole earthquake alteration of circumstance, our ideas about the structure of our society have hardly mellowed, much less developed in a rough tandem with events. *The muddle is upon us*, and the days grow shorter.

The approaching crisis has been occasioned by the awful advance of technology; for the technology which has not been prepared for (or is not soon accommodated socially) is no blessing at all, but the deepest ironic disaster of the human race. The human being today stands poised to be destroyed by his primary biological blessing—his propensity to develop and his capacity to use *technique*: there is a direct line from the prehensile thumb to the nuclear bomb.

The political essence of the approaching crisis is that we have not been able to

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make our great power felt by *non-military* means, either at home or abroad. The domestic source of this impotence derives, for example, from such ritualistic activities as budget-balancing, devotion to the supposed stability of the dollar, fear of inflation (or federal action to forestall it), and accompanying under-use of productive facility and talent. Under-use and mis-allocation of our great industrial and technological power, except under and by virtue of military purpose, flow directly from the predominant bookkeeping considerations which go by the names of money, profit, price, return on investment, etc.—that is, *existing property rights, all of which and the system comprising which, I will here call "paper."* Taken as seriously and devoutly as it has been and still is today, the paper system is inadequate to insure full production at home and to fight the cold war on non-military terms. So this is the nature of the domestic crisis: we must achieve a political posture whereby we can take the Paper Economy less seriously in order to be able to modify it according to non-paper considerations. If we fail to do this, we will surely forsake the promise of the future and also fail in the cold war. Or worse, we will trap ourselves into fighting it out on military grounds, which could well be the end of all of us.

The traditional way out of an American crisis is no longer available to us. For one thing, you don't win the cold war (unless you are Senator Goldwater), you just keep the nuclear holocaust from occurring.

For another thing, it is increasingly obvious that the war in which we are engaged is not to be fought with military hardware: the military part of it is simply a stand-off operation which allows the true conflict to go forward elsewhere and by other means. We could mobilize the economy for a World War II-type effort of several years duration: *but to mobilize the social economy for the kind of conflict in which we actually are engaged requires structural changes in our society, and these changes will be permanent.* Indeed, they will be continuing and cumulative. There's the rub—to accept or resist this new experimental form of mobilization.

It is a hard irony of history that calls upon the conservative leadership of the most conservative great nation in the world to choose freely the pursuit of a permanent social revolution. However, analysis and reflection reveal over and over again, and finally compel the conclusion, that this is the contour of the crisis—and that just such an unreasonable demand is now being made by *our* history.

MONEY AND SCARCITY

Money is not real. What made it *seem* real for so long was its scarcity. Since money is supposed to be spent on things, its scarcity can truly reflect reality only when that reality is made up of a general scarcity of things. It no longer is, except mostly by intention. Since the scarcity of money no longer mirrors the scarcity of things, and since money that is not scarce is not exactly money, the whole meaning of the symbol has changed profoundly.

We are the most productive society in history, and consequently are daily threatened by cumulative non-scarcity. In 1961, the Secretary of the Treasury said:

We are no longer in a time of shortages. . . . There is unusual—and under-utilized—capacity everywhere in our land today; in steel, in autos, in housing, in textiles, in chemicals—indeed, everywhere we look. We also—and unfortunately—are under-utilizing our labor force, which

stands ready and willing to operate the unused capacity of our industrial plant.

Because capitalism and its paper world were based on actual scarcity, the drama of the system was to contend heroically with this condition. But the whole point about the new freedom, the new technology, is that it has made scarcity absurd. So our society can no longer dare to be based on it, heroically or otherwise.

The paper system is still conceived in terms of scarcity—still founded upon that concept. Since scarcity no longer occurs naturally in this country (unless the Paper Economy just as we have it today is considered “natural”), we are quickly approaching the point where the nation will have to make a fundamental decision about whether it can do without the whole baggage of historical ideas which were outgrowths of previously existing scarcities—the psychological basis of the Paper Economy. I think there is no question that man's sense of himself, and the traditional psychology accompanying it, have been substantially conditioned by these earlier scarcities. Consequently, the final result of the technological revolution will be a new conception of man.

This need disturb no one, since economics has always been based upon a psychological image of man—on some model of motivation. In this sense, what we are faced with is a revolution in motivation, and the conservatives don't want it—because they see it as an attack on their personalities. Indeed, it is frightening, as well as exhilarating. What on earth will we do with ourselves if making a dollar loses its allure? If “hewing to the line” no longer really matters? If the traditional idea of sacrificing the present for the sake of the future becomes fatuous? (The reason President Kennedy keeps asking for “sacrifice” from the nation is not that any real ones are needed, but because he shrewdly understands that the nation yearns for the mood.) How, then, will we face up to the prospect of a decent life?

American business prefers to call itself

The Free Enterprise System—or even more expansively, The American Way of Life. The latter designation is so accurate that it leaves nothing to be discussed; but the former is a Big Symbol that can and has been discussed endlessly. This talkathon has been greatly facilitated by the fact that “free enterprise” cannot possibly be defined for reasonable people as something actually happening between New York and Los Angeles. Apart from everything else, the idea assumes a miniscule role for the federal government—and everybody knows better than that. No, the only existential meaning of *enterprise* is what businessmen generally happen to be doing at the moment, and *free* is merely the accompanying demand that they be left alone to do it.

Industrialism, the network of technology and productive industry, is not to be identified with free enterprise or capitalism or any other control-system which at a particular historical moment stands astride and determines how and why men shall operate the industrial complex. Capitalism is not the same thing as industrialism, any more than capital means the plants, machines, and other subjects and objects of technology which shape the physical world under industrialism. Capital is not Things—and neither are enterprises, free or otherwise. Capital is *assets*; and enterprises are more or less organized and more or less purposeful collections of assets. *An asset is a money-value*: another symbol-on-paper, in this instance that Torah of the Paper Economy, The Balance Sheet. But you could spend a whole day walking through the mammoth Fairless Works of the United States Steel Corporation without seeing the slightest piece of balance-sheet profit perched expectantly in the vicinity of a furnace. All the pieces are hidden in the heads of the personnel—in some heads more than other heads, but all of them in one head or another. In the early commercial days, before machine technology got moving, capital referred to a stock

of goods. But now goods can be produced so quickly by machines that capital refers for the most part to the machines themselves, while goods are called “inventory.” Goods are now felt by producers to be a liability as often as they are an asset. You *control* the machines, but you just *move* inventory. Indeed, you *have* to move inventory.

COMPETITION?

The central idea of business ideology is Competition, because that makes all sorts of difficult, questionable, and downright unpleasant matters come out all right in the end. As J. K. Galbraith has engagingly put it: “Like marital fidelity, decent plumbing, or clean underclothing, competition is a prerequisite of respectability in our society.”

The Idea of Competition asserts that competitive markets are the exclusive regulators of all practical and moral relations in society. The result has been that all conscious human intervention in the economic process, or planning, is accepted only as disaster threatens; and once its agonizing birth has been effected, the high priests of paper propriety revoke its birthright by denying or ignoring its existence. The Idea of Competition (*not* the occasional fact) is one of the most mindless notions ever to dominate the supposed thinking of a society of grown men.

The issue is not whether at some times and places competition functions as an effective allocative factor. It does, but look at it this way: in any fresh, unorganized situation you are going to have unorganized activity—“competition”—until someone is able at last to organize the thing on some rational basis. Most of our great business heroes—Rockefeller, Carnegie, Morgan—were men of capacity who dramatically carried forward this process of organization. They recognized that competition was a dangerous form of internal warfare, of benefit to no one, and exactly the kind of senseless feuding which it has

been the role and the justification of the state since time immemorial to suppress. So they suppressed it, and did a very good job of it for that time and place. Of course they were not the state *de jure*, but that was not an important matter.

American business relies on the Idea of Competition, along with a deep animus toward federal power, because it is bitterly embattled today. The business system is fighting a rear-guard action against the continuing transfer of power from private to governmental hands. That it is a cynical, hopeless, rear-guard action has been revealed by the recently-lived-through eight years of "Modern Republicanism." It turns out that American business interests are not counter-revolutionaries, but only determined saboteurs of a reasonable adjustment to the change. David Riesman has said: "We have been trained for a world of scarcity and we have developed an image of man under the psychology of scarcity." Our ruling business groups are extremely reluctant to modify the training or abandon the image.

Business has not and will never recover from its 1929 failure to run the society with a minimum of decency and competence. It had all the power it needed, and all the freedom in the world to use it—but the hand was overplayed, and the business system revealed itself once and for all to be incapable of resisting the easy exploitation of the money-credit-price mechanism. The Great Depression was the melodramatic end of effective private government in the United States.

Since then the federal government has underwritten the entire functioning of the economy. That is what the New Deal meant; that's all it meant; and that meaning stands under Modern Republicanism. The traditional underwriters—investment and commercial bankers, utilizing the central banking authority of the Federal Reserve System, and allied with corporate power in key industries—were unequal to the task. They were not able to fulfill their obligations. So, in 1933 a new under-

writer was called in. The terms of the new underwriting contract were stated generally, the details being left to future needs and contingencies, and "arrangements" to be made with the former underwriters—as in any major bankruptcy. It is these details of the contract, of our new unwritten constitution, that make up the issues of our political life. But the remnants of private government are not negotiating in good faith with us, their creditors, nor are they acting reasonably with regard to the common enterprise. Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Morgan would never have behaved so badly.

WHAT IS PROPERTY?

The ordinary idea of property is that it is made up of Things. A man's property is what he owns—and he looks about him and sees a house, some furniture, clothes in the closet, a car in the garage, and his mother's amber beads. *His* property. But wait a minute: there's an insurance policy, some cash in his pocket, a bank account, and maybe even ten shares of AT & T. That's property, too. But of a very different kind. He doesn't own AT & T but only ten out of many millions of shares—which *share* only after some billions of dollars of debt. In fact, his ten shares have to be carefully punched out on an IBM card not to be lost sight of entirely. The stock certificate, the deposit, the policy, the cash are all paper. He just owns the paper—he doesn't own AT & T, the insurance company, the bank, or the Federal Reserve System. So his property consists of some things and some paper. But wait a minute again: he lives in the house, everybody on the block will tell you it's his house, but as a matter of fact the Nickel Savings Bank of Lower Sandusky has a greater right to the house than he has—it's worth \$15,000 and his equity comes to only five as against the bank's mortgage of ten. Likewise the car, and mechanical trinkets in the house. (Maybe even the clothes on his back.)

Where does all that leave us with the idea of property? Well, the truth is that if you are talking about things, you hardly need the idea of property at all—until somebody tries to take some of it away from you. *Property is not the thing, it is rights in and to the thing.* Consequently, the ordinary notion of property, as being made up of things, is almost exactly wrong. Most frequently, property ends up being a right to force someone to act or refrain from acting in a certain way toward a certain thing, or to pay for the privilege of refusal—pay in that biggest of all forms of property, *money*, the great common denominator.

The generic form of property is a contract, an agreement, a promise. (I won't bother going into the textbook definition of a contract—let it suffice that contracts are made up of mutual promises, with the added proviso that in law a man may "promise" by his course of conduct, without opening his mouth and uttering that ringing law-school phrase, which still raises the hair on my neck, "*I accept!*") The right to enter into contracts "freely" is the substance of the free market competition notion—a market being the place, or the habitual pattern by which, contracts of purchase and sale are supposed to be entered into freely. Economists have always been blinded by the glamor of the equilibrium of the free market. But when you look at the same phenomenon from the point of view of freedom of contract—the lawyers' point of view—you are much more apt to see this freedom for the lopsided license to steal that in large part it was. And it was freedom of contract rather than the free market that served as the first grand bastion of defense to be raised by business, and then to fall in the course of the popular onslaught against unbridled capitalist plunder in the 19th century. Freedom of contract justified almost any predatory practice; the free market serves mostly to justify unfettered pricing power. The main reason that freedom of contract has never been

as free as it is advertised—and it is a painfully obvious reason—is that sellers and buyers are not equal in bargaining power. This means that the terms of sale will simply reflect the power, or lack of it, that each party brings to the market place. So a market is also a financial slaughterhouse, where the strong chop up the weak.

The right of the dominant seller or buyer to his dominance in the market place is enforced by the state. Indeed, that is one of the chief functions of the state under capitalism. This big fact has been obscured in a big way by the historical circumstance that the bourgeois state supplanted autocratic monarchies, and in the course of the struggle, the bourgeoisie developed a non-state or anti-state, almost anarchistic, ideology. But when control of the state had been achieved, the new ruling class did not pursue its own anarchistic principles. To say the least.

USES OF THE PROPERTY IDEA

Many economists who are not lawyers, and most lawyers who are not especially conscious of what they are doing, see the world of production and things as controlled by the encompassing universe of money and credit; the independent concept of property may be lost somewhere in between. This is unfortunate, because the truth is that money-and-credit are simply the most generalized and therefore the most obvious form of property. It is the *whole* property system, not the money-and-credit system alone, that decisively represents our society's attempt to control and rationalize the real world of things and the people, *pari passu* thingified, who live in it.

In the massive corporate economy, the old market equilibrium theory is thoroughly bankrupt, whether or not supplemented by Keynes's money-manipulation notions. (Keynes's theories, as applied, are not adequate for a full production economy: he was an exceptionally clever

and completely English dialectician who modified received theory no more than necessary for his purpose at the time. He did *not* revise economics in the light of corporate market power; he accepted existing theoretical baggage and then merely outlined a role for the government to save the whole works—in special circumstances—by monetary and fiscal maneuvering. And he buried the gold standard, that shining relic of pre-1914 confidence in the rightness of all things.) This market theory—which at best offers a passable description of certain aspects of the 18th and 19th centuries—is, along with Keynes's techniques for keeping a depression from downright destroying us, the basis of fateful governmental policy. It gives one pause.

In the new social economy, all rights-property is paper—and all the paper in the Paper Economy must be considered if a Keynesian effort to influence or control the real world of things is attempted. All the paper—not just federal debt and the money in central banks. But because of the stale distinction between “property” and money/credit, we don't usually take all the paper into account. As a consequence, we are trying quite unsuccessfully to deal with a runaway technology within the framework of an archaic business-profit system. The result is under-used and mis-used plant capacity, a circumstance covered over—just barely—by a puerile public relations culture which is almost impossible to bear, even by its beneficiaries.

We have sown a 19th-century dream, and are reaping a whirlwind of 20th-century paper.

THE PAPER DREAM

Money is a dream. It is a piece of paper on which is imprinted in invisible ink the dream of all the things it will buy, all the trinkets and all the power over others; a kind of institutionalized dream which, along with its companion dream institution of Success, constitutes the main fan-

tasy on which our way of life has been built.

But the old, pure money-dream is dying in America; we are passing through a purgatory (or, if you prefer, a child's garden) of fantastically shaped automobiles and ineluctable electric can-openers, and what our new dream will be no one knows. But at least, before we begin again, we will have touched down for a time and even have lived a little in our current consumers' paradise.

The main point is this: the money that figures so prominently in the dream of money is not money for spending. You don't ever buy anything with it. It's for earning more money. And after you really get moving, you don't even buy anything with the money you earned on the money you used to earn it, and so on.

But what is money? Well, it is not just a dream. It is also not wealth, which exists in reality and is not merely a symbol. The paper in the world of paper we live in is supposed to order the creation and use of our wealth; but it is not itself wealth. This is an essential point, and is probably the most difficult idea to come to terms with in the whole discussion of property, money/credit, and the Paper Economy.

For one thing (closer to the facts), money is a contract—the freest, most gorgeous contract of them all. Money is somebody else's promise to pay, to give me what I want, when I want it: the fully alienable contract for anything, anytime, anywhere. Whatever else history may say of the Western bourgeoisie, this honor must be accorded them: *They perfected modern money, which is a contract with parties unknown for the future delivery of pleasures undecided upon.*

Gold as cash is irrelevant (except internationally, because we are so primitive in that arena); cash is paper immediately and universally exchangeable, also called currency; currency is a contract right currently accepted; and all such contract rights are based on credit of one kind or

another (you only enter into a contract with someone you "credit" with the capacity to fulfill the contract). Therefore money is credit. And credit is based on reputation. So money is a function of reputation. And everybody knows what reputation is. Reputation, as a matter of fact, is what everybody knows about somebody. There you have, quickly, the story of money.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The whole paper show began historically with two great events, both growing out of the emergence of trading in Europe, the medieval fairs, etc., etc. The first event occurred when the first seller transferred his goods to a buyer, who at the time had no goods to trade and no gold to substitute for goods. This pioneer seller said to his buyer, probably in disgust, "OK, give me two pigs or one gold ducat next year—and if you don't show, I'll come and get you. And write it down on this piece of paper here, so there won't be any argument." The second great event begins like the first but adds a new twist—which turns out to be a creative act on about the same level as the invention of the wheel. Same scene, same characters, but when the seller goes home he's still boiling because he's stuck with a "worthless" piece of paper; his buyer may be dead next year, or impressed into military service, or go into another line of business somewhere else, or any number of things. He feels maybe he's been taken, and as so many people before and subsequently have done in that uncomfortable circumstance, he looks around for somebody to take in turn and so cut his loss, resolving firmly in his heart never to be taken again. Wonder of wonders, he finds a real patsy (he thinks) who is willing to take the buyer's paper in exchange for a half-ducat of gold payable immediately. This "patsy" happens to know that the buyer is a big man in a far country, vigorous and powerful, and well-respected: *a man of good reputation*. The

gold is exchanged for the paper, and the Paper Economy is born.

Once we get past barter—the direct exchange of things—we are stuck with gold or something like it until men begin to write down their promises and accept these instead of gold. But gold is a very limiting factor—there never was enough of it—so it was absolutely necessary to create something "as good as gold." *The closest thing to gold-today is gold-tomorrow, and that's how the system was born*. All of our paper today is ultimately gold due in a tomorrow that never comes. And just as well—there isn't enough to go around.

Now most people, I should imagine, accept checks as money because they are under the impression that banks are loaded with *real* money. It is true that you can take a check to a bank and get some engraved paper for it, if you want to be fancy, but it would be a very long day indeed for the fellows operating the government printing presses if any large number of people had this idea at the same time. No, banks are mostly just like us—all they have is bank deposits. From where do they get them, you ask? They create them—that's their business. Nice business, you say? Yes, it's not bad. It used to be rather nerve-wracking, but the New Deal took all the worry out of it. (I suppose that's why bankers loved FDR so much.)

So how does a bank begin? One line of banking started out in Europe with the goldsmiths, who knew all about gold, had a lot of it in their possession one way or another, and just naturally became bankers as the popular belief in gold and the need for banks joined to provide *one* basis for the money/credit system without which capitalist-exchange would have remained a gleam in our forefathers' eyes.

But if you are rich, or people think you are, they will assume you own gold or something "as good as gold," and such individuals became bankers, too. If they had a sufficient air of affluence, the banking customers-to-be did not bother to demand to see the color of their coin, but

assumed it was a full, rich yellow. This Mr. Big did not have much gold around the house—if he had any at all it was certainly out working for him—so his stock in trade became gold-tomorrow. *All you have to do to become a banker is to go into debt.* Mr. Big's promises to pay gold-tomorrow circulated as money, especially when endorsed by other leading citizens.

If enough people leave their money with a banker, his notes can circulate at par without being endorsed by other wealthy men—*their deposits are endorsement enough.* At this stage of the game, bankers can engrave their notes on special paper and we are well on the way toward the fantastic shambles of 19th-century American banking. And not a moment too soon, either, because all the gold, faith, deposits, hope, paper engraved and otherwise, and pure charity that the new banker-merchants have sopped up and agglomerated will hardly be enough gold-tomorrow on which to build the railroads, the steel mills, and the rest of our great industrial establishment. The people engaged in that enterprise will, besides, find it incumbent upon them to print their own money. And even that won't suffice: they will unfortunately find it necessary to steal from the government and even, on very black days, from each other.

So they played out the hand, and everybody in on it got very rich. But they wanted central banking in some more viable form than that offered by the House of Morgan. After enough of the wrong people had been hurt in enough financial panics, and after Congressman Pujo's investigation of the banking system in 1905 had smelled up the atmosphere, the quaint Federal Reserve System was allowed to enter the union in 1913, half-slave and half-free, a compromise use of government power on behalf of private banking. Thus the paper created in the course of raping a continent was canonized. You might say the policeman waited in the hall until he was needed.

CREDIT IS WONDERFUL

The phenomenon of credit is one of the most profoundly engaging in the whole rainbow range of social life. Its significance, once grasped, is truly startling.

There is a lot of talk these days about status in our society. Well, compared to credit, status is about as exciting as Calvin Coolidge in deep thought. Because the point about status is rather obvious—the details can be fascinating and funny in revealing our nonsense to ourselves—but the thing itself is just there. Status is static, but credit is dynamic. As a matter of fact, *credit is the active arm of status*, it is status on the go, status in current use to effect some purpose in the world besides mere display: *credit is status capitalized.* (It is worth while to stop and realize that Veblen's most famous book was *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, a very perceptive and amusing cartoon on the subject of status, but that his most important and brilliant work all revolved around his insights into the function of credit in America—what he called the price system. The fact that the cartoon has impressed the American intellectuals so much more than his epochal thinking on credit does no due respect either to them or to Veblen.)

Under capitalism, the reputation of individuals has been commercialized—*literally turned into money.* Indeed, that is mostly what money is. Under prior aristocratic societies, all power felt to be necessary was achieved or maintained by the display of status, by a grand here-I-am gesture, and it was not the usual thing actively to "trade on one's reputation." To trade on one's reputation is to secure credit on it—that is, issue debt—which means to commercialize or capitalize it.

It is the reputation of individuals and institutions that holds society together, and makes the wheels run. Reputation is what-a-thing-is-known-for. That is, what it is believed to be. There has never been a society based on what-a-thing-is, and the closest approach to it is the society of mod-

ern physical scientists, the creators of our technology; or the tiny society of you and me when we are in agreement, and so can dispense with the troublesome distinction between what a thing is and what it is known for, and go forward on the basis of what we agree it *shall* be known for. (Physical scientists don't agree on anything—they allow only experience to confer the blessed quality of agreement.)

One sometimes wonders, however, what the leading people in our society think they have achieved by so completely commercializing their reputations. Most of the money they get in exchange for the respect due them is not for buying anything, and a great deal of it does not even lead to the creation of real national wealth. The process therefore becomes circular—reputation creates money and money creates reputation, and not enough happens in the meanwhile. In past societies, great reputations fulfilled a much more creative social function.

BEHIND THE DEBT

The question of collateral is fundamental to the whole marvelous business of reputation and borrowing, and, consequently, to the story of the Paper Economy. We all love money (or currency, metaphysically conceived), and money is debt—but *who* gets a leg up on going into debt? That is the question. The answer begins by reference to this idea of collateral—the what-with behind the debt. Now recollect that you *earn* on collateral, and *pay* on a debt. But you are allowed to get into debt because you have some kind of collateral. That is hypothecation or capitalization (as a matter of fact, that is life-as-hypothesis—or capitalism). In the typical case, first you make a profit (earn) or appear to be doing so, then you capitalize that apparent profit-making. The most substantial collateral for further credit is a recent success: the pre-belief that you will win again.

The standing (read, *status*) of success-

ful buck-chasers substitutes for any more substantial collateral—just as in England the gentleman's overdraft is a loan secured by collateral no firmer than his proper gentleness. Whether or not, in this process, engraved paper called stock or bonds is used, is a matter of indifference. What is being collateralized or hypothecated or capitalized is a reputation for making money. The engraved paper simply makes it easier for the lender in turn to sell the debt or borrow against it—because that debt is now money, if anybody will accept it as such. And if your name is General Motors, they certainly will. (That's how consumer financing was born.)

Now in order to make all this collateralizing come out happily, it is repeatedly necessary to raise prices on goods in order to increase profits in order to make borrowing worthwhile. But everybody understands this necessity, and the important people involved are even quite knowledgeable in noting exactly the proper moment when the existing game has been played out at a particular level and another boost is in order. If necessary, production can be induced to drag its feet for a few months, everybody gets nervous about a possible deflation, and the Federal Reserve Board finally loosens up the process of creating money, thus making a rise in prices absolutely irresistible, and, with a national sigh of relief, they are once again upped. The ante having been raised, a new hand is dealt. The better technique is to blame the unions when raising prices for profit-and-credit reasons, because in that case it is not necessary to frighten everyone to death by sabotaging production; but it appears that this bit of public relations business has about had it.

The beauty of a bank is that in pooling reputations it creates a new and more glorious reputation for itself, without absolutely tying up the reputations collected in the pool. These are still more or less free to be used elsewhere. Notice how wonderfully circular this can become: individuals lend their reputations to a bank,

which can even use the reputation thereby created to guarantee the paper of these individuals, its depositors—*vide*, cashier's check, banker's acceptances, etc. Consequently, I would suggest that central banking, which exists in one way or another in all advanced capitalist credit economies, is a form of underwriting. The central bank and its depositors underwrite each other's promises.

Underwriting is the greatest credit invention of them all, after alienable paper itself (gold-tomorrow). Really all it amounts to is endorsement or guaranty—one man's credit standing behind, "*written under*," another's. Here, reputation becomes superbly generalized—nothing at all is promised, that is, put on the line, except the promise to pay if the first fellow doesn't. This tones up the quality of the paper to a wonderful degree (and it can be quite lucrative for the underwriter, too). The more people who put their names on paper, the better it is; and the bigger their reputations (for paying when due, or earning all along, or just plain having it), the better than better it is. That's underwriting, and it doesn't cost very much unless everything goes to pot. And, of course, that doesn't happen anymore.

THE AGE OF THE BIG UNDERWRITER

The biggest underwriters in the world used to be the money men in the City of London. Then their American correspondents, like Morgan, took over—at first in America, but later being called upon to shore up the mother-lode during the First World War. Finally, Morgan and other similarly situated underwriters defaulted in 1929—the situation had gotten out of hand—and then the central government of the United States became the primary underwriter. It still is today. Now when you underwrite one-half of the civilized world, you do not accomplish this by endorsing a check. In principle, yes; but the actual process is much more complicated.

Today, the federal government stands behind all our paper—and like any competent underwriter, it intervenes in the actual processes of reality on occasion (when it can) in order to insure the validity of the various make-believe promises concerning that reality. It particularly intervenes, by specific guaranty or even *de facto* receivership, in all unprofitable activities which are nevertheless necessary for the functioning of the economy.

Big corporations, being in control of the actual production of goods and administering the prices of same according to their own convenience, are in effect their own best underwriters. They are the ones who underwrite paper by actual reference to their dominant position in existing social reality. So they are the great source of new paper, or the cause of increase in the value of old paper.

Probably what happened during the 20's which made the situation unmanageable and led to the default of the financiers was that the basic creative power in the business system had, without anyone clearly recognizing the significance of the fact, shifted decisively from the old-paper centers to the producing corporations themselves. As financial institutions, the corporations ended up making the big banks look like corner grocery stores.

"In the business world the price of things is a more substantial fact than the things themselves," said Veblen. The great power of our great corporations is not their magnificent capacity to produce goods, but the taxing authority inherent in the power to raise prices. If the basic purpose of these corporations was to produce goods—to create real wealth—then they would just produce and produce and produce, as they did during the Second World War for a few years, and there would be so much wealth lying around and the bother of dumping it in the ocean would be so great that the alternative of distributing it "unprofitably" to the people who could use it would become downright attractive. In order to avoid such an unpleasant al-

ternative, the big corporations act more reasonably and view their essential power as the princely prerogative to create more paper-value. This is done periodically by raising prices, and continuously by not lowering them as costs are reduced—which they continuously are under modern technology.

PRICE IS THE THING

The bridge between the make-believe world of money/credit and other paper, and the real world of the production and exchange of things for other things, is *price*. The paper system rests absolutely on the price level, and the only way out of our paper-chasing madness is through rational control of the price level.

If prices are held steady, demand can be fed into the economy until the limits of supply (short-term) or technological capacity (long-term) are reached. The result is full production—full use of our productive capacity. The “demand” referred to is easily created by printing presses: it is just paper. Prices are not supposed to go up until demand, of whatever source, outdistances supply-capacity—and it just doesn’t anymore, except rarely and in special circumstances. The reason prices go up anyway, thus insuring under-use of our plant, is that the people controlling them want them to go up. They prefer profit-paper to demand-paper—and it is they who control the printing presses of the Paper Economy, so to speak.

The whole awesome structure of conventional theory, including the sterilized Keynesianism of the Federal Reserve Board, is based on the assumed ubiquity of *price* competition. But in the most important sectors of the economy—especially where the big manufacturer stands astride the raw material supplier and the ultimate consumer—there just isn’t enough price competition. Which raises a very serious problem.

The Paper Economy is like a balloon, which is why the key terms are inflation

and deflation. The hole where the air goes in is labeled “Price—Blow Here.” And they sure do. During the 50’s it has been figured that the dollar lost value at the rate of $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent a year—while the rest of the smart paper gained.

Now there is a great deal to be said on the subject of inflation, and most of it has already been said more than once. The Official Morning Line on inflation is simple and clear-cut: governments spend too much and workers get too many raises. Since governments and workers are the best spenders-on-things and the slowest creators-of-paper, the Official Morning Line is exactly wrong—and one can only hope, as usual, for better post-time comprehension.

There is no inflation in the real world of things, only allocation. Real values do not get inflated, they get allocated; only paper and balloons get inflated.

Inflation is the very essence of the paper system which capitalism has never even dreamed of living without, or even significantly altering, except in moments and for moments of extreme crisis, like World War II. Inflation is raising prices (it is *not* any particular theory as to why they are raised). Prices go up, they don’t go down: since the 30’s they haven’t even dipped very much. This used to be called progress and now it is called inflation. The difference is that now it has become frightening, even to those who benefit most from it. Inflation, we were told endlessly in business advertisements, is the “cruellest tax of all.” So was the previous progress, also known as the accumulation of capital.

Inventory is important in understanding modern inflation because it constitutes a sensitive contact-point between the two worlds of paper and things. If the price of an inventory-thing goes up, it is better to have a lot of it; if it goes down, money is better. Now most of the postwar recessions have featured inventory-panics among businessmen (these substitute for the financial panics of our early capitalist history, the last of which we shall ever see

having occurred—along with much else—in 1929). Why should this be? The more inventory we have, the more “backing” there is to all the paper that’s around. If inflation is blamed on too much spending—money and not enough things to spend it on, then why, as soon as there are enough things, do we have a recession? Because in such a situation more paper to buy goods must either be handed to those who will use it, or the price must be lowered so that the goods can be moved with the given quantity of purchasing-paper. But the price cannot be lowered without disturbing the value of all the non-purchasing paper which is sustained by it—and for the same reason there is a reluctance to raise either wages or taxes, which would also increase the quantity of purchasing-paper. The new inflation-recession cycle results from the continuing chase after paper-profit in a circumstance where too much product is too easily produced. The paper system is simply not adequate any longer to the job of clearing the shelves.

ON THE DOWNSIDE

The other face of inflation is deflation, and that’s like scarcity—it’s in short supply.

There are no losers anymore. Prices don’t go down, they only go up. Important quantities of paper-value are not wiped out any longer. The federal government has underwritten the Paper Economy—and the underwriter will not permit a really effective deflation.

Ah, but the old days were wonderful. Somebody yelled “Cheezit, the cops!” and everybody started to scamper around frantically trying to collect all debts at the same time. Quite a sight. The show amounted to a heretical worship of the ritual of payment—sort of a financial Holyrollerism—in which everything is going smoothly on Beneficent Wednesday but on Black Thursday it is arbitrarily decided that the “tomorrow” in gold-tomorrow is knock-

ing at the door like Banquo’s ghost. All the paper that can be called is called for clearing, and balances have to be settled in gold-today—right away. And nobody has the what-with to lend anymore. Well, there never was enough gold for *that* kind of religion (if there were, then gold would not be gold—it wouldn’t even be as good as gold) and the fact became clear even to the High Priests themselves in 1907, when everybody was frightened by the mass passion to be paid in yellow metal. Thus the Federal Reserve System. There have to be limits to religious frenzy in any well-ordered church—you have to keep the True Believers in line. (Financial panics were also encouraged by the fact that markets—i.e., the domination of the consumer—were imperfectly organized: some real competition here and there, and as a consequence prices could on occasion be forced down faster than costs, which brings the whole related paper structure tumbling down.)

We have not yet figured out a workable substitute for the ritual of bankruptcy and other forms of price reduction and deflation—for letting the air out of the balloon. Meanwhile the air is getting fairly stale inside, even though we keep blowing fresh air in through the price-hole.

How can we deflate without interfering too much with the non-paper area of employment and production? The answer is simply to try, as we have been trying, to manipulate the mass of paper (but not just bank deposits) with a comprehension of its basic unreality, and to keep our attention focused on important matters, like real wealth and its rational allocation. A real Old Religion type of credit liquidation is really out of the question. That couldn’t happen without production slowing down disastrously. We have had a steady government-underwritten (and business-benefited) inflation since 1933 (with a special and unnecessary spurt for 1946–48), with all the old and new paper protected, and we’re stuck with that system.

But the fact that we live in the Age of the Big Underwriter, that prices don't go down, and that paper is never seriously deflated, is brand new, decisive, and changes the entire nature of our system.

The money-unit is not stable and it does not measure all things—it merely measures all paper. The value of the dollar has to shift in order for it to do its job. The fact that it no longer shifts upward is unfortunate, and of course makes the system of paper-value increasingly intramural. But the true historical purpose of the paper system was never to measure the value of things (that would have been an impossible task); its purpose was to value a future-with-more-things-in-it more highly, much more highly, than a present-deficient-in-things. It certainly achieved that purpose effectively, although not equitably. What has compromised the paper system is merely the superfluity of things in the present. The future has arrived—but the paper-chasers refuse to join the welcoming committee. The urgent point I want to make, is that somebody ought to get out there and welcome it anyway.

What is the difference between one hundred dollars “saved”—even out of salary, or go further and say hoarded in Federal Reserve Notes—and one hundred dollars “made” by a one-point rise in a hundred-share smidgeon of Snappy Garter Inc., which rise, lasting only one day, resulted from an unfounded rumor that the Company’s third-quarter earnings would snap back to 1961 levels? Freeze it in time, and you will notice upon dissection that all paper is created equal.

Nobody has to “save”—that is, wait and work a year to get an automobile—

so that General Motors can build another factory. That would be true only under full production—and we haven’t experienced that phenomenon except in limited sectors and for limited periods since the war. Moreover, under full production—this is a very revealing fact—the paper system with its price airhole is utterly incapable by itself of rationally allocating materials and effort: to accomplish this, under full technological steam, reality as well as its conventional symbols must be consulted.

Paper is a useful and historically valid technique of accumulating capital, by means of a kind of privately distributed authoritarianism (relying on big banks and small governments), in those circumstances where the demand for goods is so great that all goods possible are actually produced, and new factories besides. That was some time ago. Probably the reason the Great Depression was so great (as W. W. Rostow suggests) is that we had by that time left those circumstances rather decisively behind.

The validity of paper in the absence of scarcity is unthinkable without conscious control of its quantity and/or value. When scarcity is in inadequate supply, so to speak, paper leads to a literal form of madness—a distortion or denial of reality in order to preserve the illusion of the absent condition. And when the power of great corporations is a part of the situation, reality itself gives way to the illusion—and a weird, glistening, new kind of scarcity appears, as an emanation from beyond the historical grave. It is Scarcity Regained—one of the ugliest of all human creations.

JEAN DANIEL

THE JEWISH FUTURE IN ALGERIA

A Dissenting View

It has generally been assumed, both by the great majority of Algerian Jews themselves and their co-religionists in other countries, that there can be no safe future for the Jews in the new Algerian Republic. With this view, the distinguished French journalist JEAN DANIEL (himself a Jew born and raised in Algeria) has long disagreed. Since M. Daniel's position of "prudent optimism" on the question of Arab-Jewish coexistence in the Maghreb has rarely been argued publicly in America, we invited him to present his case to the readers of COMMENTARY. M. Daniel's reports on the Algerian struggle in L'Express over the past seven years have won him wide acclaim in France for their reliability and the depth of feeling expressed.

In view of the extreme importance of the question of the Jewish future in Algeria, we plan to publish another article next month which takes a radically different approach to the issues involved.

THE LAST OFFICIAL census of Algerian Jews indicated that "145,000 French Algerians of Jewish faith and indigenous Algerian descent" had been settled on Algerian soil. Today it is estimated that of this number only about 40,000 still remain. Cities like Constantine, Setif, Tlemcen, and Oran have, in effect, seen their Jewish communities suddenly disappear. For the most part, these Algerian Jews (almost 90 per cent of them) are presently living in metropolitan France.

More than half of those who have left are probably waiting for the moment when they can return to their native soil: these were people who had fled precipitously, abandoning their apartments and their stores—everything, in short, that they were unable to carry along easily. For most of the others, departure had been in view for quite some time, and the transitions were not so hard. They already had a foothold in metropolitan France—especially in the

vicinity of Paris and the Côte d'Azur—and only returned to Algeria in order to salvage their property little by little.

Finally, there is the distressing spectacle of the diaspora of the poorer Jews, those who had mixed with the so-called *petits blancs* ("white trash")—that French proletariat of Maltese, Spanish, and Sicilian origin. These Jews, many of them going out of Algeria for the first time, had to leave their family graves, their childhood memories, and their jobs as well. They are the real exiles: to them, all that is not Algeria must be foreign. Whatever their past sufferings on the soil of Algeria, it was still the only place where they could feel at home.

Indeed, for the past several weeks these poorer Jews have eagerly been seeking reassurances about a possible future in Algeria. They are asking what will become of the independent Algerian state; to what degree the Algerian Republic with its Arab-Moslem majority will be able to ac-

cord a place to non-Moslems; and finally—more precisely—whether, given the permanent conflict between Israel and the Arab states, coexistence between Jews and Arabs in the Maghreb will be possible.

To a certain number of Jews from Israel and the Middle East, and even to a large number of American Jews, these questions seem unrealistic. Indeed, as far as such Jews are concerned, the questions should not even be asked: Jewish-Arab coexistence is impossible. Despite the many substantial arguments that are given to support this negative thesis, it must nevertheless be said that the Maghreb Jews, even when forced into exile, even when bitterly regretting France's departure, and even after having suffered considerably, do not see the problem in the same way as their co-religionists from other countries. The explanation lies in certain historical facts which have exerted a considerable influence on Jewish life in the Maghreb (that is, in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya).

IT is important to remember that there have always been Jews in Algeria. Some historians still wonder whether the people of the Bible and the land of Canaan were not perhaps originally from North Africa. What is known for certain is that two centuries prior to the Christian era, in the vast mountainous regions of Algeria, there was a completely Judaized Berber population; although changed, it still survives today. The last victory of a Jewish army, before the founding of the State of Israel, was won by Berber Jews against Greek forces attempting to occupy Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. And at the time of the earliest Arab conquests, the most violent Berber resistance came from the tribes of a Jewish princess from Aurès, El Kahena (the Priestess), a figure still praised by Algerian revolutionaries.

Until the Arab conquests of the 7th and 12th centuries, then, we can say a Jewish-Berber population, sometimes animist, sometimes Christianized as in the case of

St. Augustine, constituted the Algerian people. An Israeli sociologist from Algeria, André Chouraki, has demonstrated the close relationship of the Hebraic, Aramean, and Punic languages; and a mixture of the three, enriched by Arabic, is still spoken by the Berbers of Kabylia, the M'zab, Aurès, and the Sahara.

In large part it was the power of Islam that guaranteed the success of the Arab conquest of so individualistic a people: the Arabs, as warrior missionaries, did not hesitate to settle down, marry the Berbers, and completely mix with the conquered population. Great numbers of Berber Jews converted to Islam, and there are still distortions of such names as Cohen and Levy in many Maghreb Moslem families.

Since then, relations between Moslems and Jews in North Africa have been those of individuals of completely different religion who are nevertheless conscious of belonging to the same people. True, there were persecutions of "infidels"; there were, for the Jewish communities above all, special regulations and unfortunate discriminatory measures; but there never was, in the European sense of the word, racial discrimination among a people with the same language, customs, and tradition. For example, the number of holy men ("*Marabout*" or "*rabbis*") common to both Jews and Moslems in Algeria is considerable.

There can, of course, be no question of re-creating the past, or of considering that the condition of the Maghreb Jews of several centuries ago was an enviable one. But it is well to recall the interesting fact that North Africa was the refuge for the great Jewish philosopher, Maimonides. We should also remember that Algerian Jews have, at least twice, stood by the side of the Moslems in foreign wars—on October 23, 1541, against Charles V, and on July 8, 1775, against Count O'Reuilly. Indeed, these two victories over invaders are still observed by certain Jewish and Algerian communities on the Purim Ket-

tanim holidays, the 4th day of the month of Hesvan and the 2nd day of the month of Tammuz. Jews celebrated the Moslem state's victory in Algiers as if it were the victory of Esther over Ahasuerus—so fearful had they been at the prospect of seeing the fanatics of the Spanish Inquisition introduce their dreaded practices into the Maghreb. It was not uncommon to see Moslem women seated in the women's section of a synagogue, joining in a service of prayer for some holy man. And today in Tlemcen, Moslems and Jews still foregather one day of the year to say prayers in honor of a Moslem *marabout* who had been the protector of Jews expelled from Spain during the Inquisition.

Thus, for better or worse, there has been Jewish-Arab coexistence in the Islam Maghreb, and hard as it may be to believe now, European Jews preferred this situation to living under the rule of Catholic governments. That is, until the French Revolution. The year 1789 was of course one of the most important dates in Jewish emancipation (along with the reign of the Ahmed Bey in Tunisia—the “liberal Bey” as he was called, who in the 1850's prepared the way for the writing of complete equality into the Tunisian constitution for all inhabitants, regardless of race or religion).

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION changed everything. The Maghreb Jews, who (despite vexing discriminations) had considered their condition on the whole more desirable than that of their Russian or European co-religionists, now saw the face of freedom—of complete liberation. From this time on, the large body of Jews fairly worshipped France, and received the members of the French expeditionary force in 1830 as their liberators. The French in turn deemed it politic to lean on the somewhat oppressed minority groups, which in Algeria were mainly the Jews and the Mozabites—the latter being Chittes, disciples of a Moslem heresy which is today the religion of Iran.

The famous Crémieux Decree of 1870 in one stroke made all Algerians of Jewish faith full-fledged French citizens: and the Algerian Jewish community gladly accepted. At the same time, the Decree was the cause of the first serious rupture between Algerian Jews and Arabs, leading to the era of pogroms and incidents.

If it is important to recall the past, certainly it is not to prove that the Jews preferred Moslem to French guaranties—on the contrary, as we have seen. But a knowledge of the history of the community does reveal to what an extent these Algerian Jews remained profoundly Algerian, steeped in the Jewish-Berber culture. In the light of this, we can understand why North African Jews created such serious problems in Jerusalem a few years ago—why they have felt so unhappy in Israel. And we can also understand why the issue of a return to Algeria should now involve a large number of exiled Jews—and that this issue deserves close consideration.

What exactly, is the Algerian Jews' most pressing problem? Under the terms of the Evian agreement, they are considered to be both French and Algerian, for a period of three years: during that time (which began July 1) Algerian Jews, if they choose not to have confidence in the future of the new Algerian state, may go where they please, to France or to Israel, selling or taking their possessions with them. If they decide to settle in France, they benefit from the Refugee Aid Act which provides indemnity, housing, and employment. For the time being, consequently, there is no reason for panic, simply because no one has the authority to prevent the Jews, any more than Catholics, Protestants, or Moslems in Algeria, from moving wherever they wish. The problem arises only when the Jews want to become Algerian citizens—but then there is no problem: for only those who trust in the future of the independent Algerian Republic will want to become part of it. Indeed, the Evian agreement,

by joining the destinies of the Algerian and European communities, has placed everyone under the French army's protection for the next three years and accorded to both parties thereafter an interest in the possibilities of cooperation. Suppose French nationals—Jews or non-Jews—should become victims of discriminatory measures in the Algerian Republic: under the agreement, France could withhold its very substantial aid, or it could apply sanctions to Moslems living on French territory.

It will be argued that the Jews are nevertheless threatened to a greater extent than the Europeans; that there exists today a willful confusion in Arab countries between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism; and that Algeria is already a part of the Arab League and Casablanca group—both of which have affirmed their solidarity with the Arab refugees from Palestine and their hostility toward Israel. All that is true. And it is in part for this reason that a large proportion of Jews have vigorously supported the cause of a French Algeria. There were some among the parachutists who brought about the coup d'état of May 13, 1958; others joined the OAS (Secret Army Organization), which must be judged guilty of the worst massacres of innocent civilians in Algeria's history.

It is difficult to determine whether the Jews who participated in the OAS massacres were acting as Jews. No Jewish flag was flown, and no specifically Jewish organization was involved. But when an Arab from Oran sees a group of young Jews approaching, he does not stop to ask himself about their motives—he only registers the fact that they are Jews. But of course, as we know, Arabs are far from being the only ones to react this way; it is simply that they have recently been the most noticed—not altogether justly, perhaps. For how could we expect the Arabs to be free of the anti-Semitism latent throughout the world? The Jews, quite naturally, are on the side of those

who offer them the most security. As they once stood with the Moslems against the Spaniards, they now find themselves with the French against the Arabs.

But in any event, the official position of all the responsible members of the independent Algerian Republic is *laïque*—for equality and against all discrimination. This was emphatically made clear in the official comments that followed on the remarks attributed to Mr. Ben Bella by Cairo journalists who had reported him as saying that he intended to raise a 100,000-man army against Israel. The immediate reaction in Algerian circles was such that Ben Bella denied the statement. He accused Arab newspapermen from the Middle East of lying and, speaking to me personally, stressed his gratitude to the Jews who had helped him both in France and abroad.

FOR THOSE who are at all familiar with Jewish-Arab relations, the importance of Ben Bella's denial would appear to have greater weight than his alleged assertions. He stood to lose popularity in the Middle East by making such a denial. That he made it, nevertheless, points to the fact that in Algeria his following is not anti-Semitic, and also that he prefers his Algerian to his Arab future. Algerian Jews have since received all sorts of other assurances. I am often asked what these assurances are worth, and I am reminded that despite its having been condemned by the leaders of the Russian revolution, anti-Semitism still exists in East European countries. That people do not always pursue their chosen ideal to the letter is certainly true; and I realize that the Algerian revolution's exclusion of anti-Semitism does not necessarily mean that the masses will refrain from being anti-Semitic. Very well, if this is indeed so, how then shall we proceed to think about the problem? Whom shall we trust? Whom believe? France, England, the United States? Don't similar contradictions exist in those countries too?

Of course, the problem of Israel is not a factor in France or England or the United States. But Algeria, in this, as in other matters, demonstrates a basic difference. The new Republic's young officials and intellectuals, the cadres of administrative personnel, are modeling their revolution on the kinds of movements that took place in Yugoslavia, Cuba, even Israel: Oriental Pan-Arabism they see as anachronistic. One must not forget, for example, that a pure Algerian, a direct descendant of the famous Emir Abdel Khader who fought against the French in 1840, has just written a long book on the Judeo-Arab conflict, in which he compares the purity of the Algerian revolution to Israel's war of liberation. This book, which has caused considerable stir since it is the first time an Arab has shown so keen and brotherly a comprehension of Israel, was distributed in the prisons to young FLN members. Imagine the enormous scandal such a book would have created in the Middle East. In Algeria, although it no doubt has evoked some bitter discussion, anyone who wishes may read it.

OVER THE PAST years, many young Algerian revolutionaries have talked to me about their projects. Among other things, they reminded me that the Jews of French-dominated Algeria hardly lived in a paradise of liberty and fraternity. Who maltreated them? Certainly not the Arabs, but the French colons: though "French" is stretching it. It was the Spaniards, Italians, and Maltese—claiming France for their own—who turned European Algeria into a sounding board for the activities of all the anti-Semitic parties that had been discredited in metropolitan France since the Dreyfus affair and were seeking, together with Drumont and Max Regis, a new center of action. The Jews, under these conditions, were subjected to absolute persecution. At elections, a candidate would blazon across the entire balcony width of Algiers' largest building

that he was "the anti-Jewish candidate." This assured him of a greater number of voters—there were no Arab voters. It was Europeans, too, who were quickly discovered to be the instigators of the disastrous Constantine pogroms in 1935, inciting Arabs against Jews.

It is well to remember that the Arabs were not the ones who in 1941 abolished the Crémieux Decree by which France had naturalized all Algerian Jews in 1870. Nor did Arabs put into effect the racial laws of Pétain and Vichy. Finally, it was not Arabs, but two young European students who, in 1940, put forth and won the demand that anti-Semitism be more virulent in Algeria than in Nazi-occupied France.

The young Algerian revolutionaries to whom I have talked in the past few years have also insisted that they are not concerned with the Middle East, whose problems, they say, are too remote: "The sole imperialism that oppresses us is the French colonial system. Line up with us against it, and we will know how to be grateful. Let there be some Jewish martyrs in our cause. Israel constantly votes against us at the UN—understandable, though it would be more intelligent for them to abstain. But beware lest Zionist activity draw the Algerian Arabs nearer to the Arabs of the Middle East. . . ."

Was all this a matter of tactics? Were the people who advanced such proposals sincere? I myself believe in the forcing quality of the chosen tactic. I believe the means determine the end, that Machiavellians are always caught in their own game, and, finally, that the tactic chosen reveals, precisely, a certain measure of sincerity. It is enough to know that some of the Algerian revolutionaries have accepted Israeli aid.

Israeli but not Zionist. It serves no purpose, indeed, to recognize the Algerian Republic in the spectacular way Israel just did. Of course Golda Meir quite rightly recalled that the Libyans have never been duly grateful to Israel for the

latter's decisive vote in the United Nations, making possible the proclamation of Libya's independence. In the present situation of the Arabs, and while the world waits for the two parties in the Palestinian conflict to come to some sort of settlement, the unselfish approach will pay off best. The Algerians are going to need agronomists who aren't propagandists, doctors who aren't missionaries. The experiment deserves a try in discretion, silence, and efficiency. Publicity can only push the Algerian leaders into demonstrating that they are more Arab than the others. Publicity will only jeopardize whatever Jewish life there is in the Maghreb, and more especially in Algeria.

It is not a question of setting one argument against another, but of correcting one situation by another. Arab anti-Zionism is what it is; we can do nothing about it. But Algerian anti-Semitism is in the

process of being corrected by Algerian leaders of good will. How can we refuse to help them in this effort?

In short, Jewish-Arab coexistence in Algeria is a gamble, but an ennobling one to take; and this coexistence partially depends upon the astuteness of Israeli diplomacy. The Algerian revolution is special: it encompasses a progressive ideology which in the main overleaps racial and religious sectarianism. To the extent that cooperation between France and Algeria becomes a moving force, the Algerian Jews are destined to be the natural liaison between the two countries. A Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine, can, of course, reduce all these positive factors to complete insignificance. But if, in due time, Zionism learns to hold its fire, if trouble in the Middle East abates, and the Algerian leaders remain faithful to their principles, a prudent optimism is not unjustified.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 30's

FOR THE LAST two decades almost everyone has been trying to forget what happened in the 30's; now, suddenly, everyone is trying to remember. Ideas that had been written off are back in circulation again, and commitments that for years had been dismissed as "irresponsible" are once more taken seriously. The explanation is not so hard to find, but it is sticky and takes us into problems we do not like to face. For the new turn means that temperate solutions having failed, people are looking again for radical ones.

In this see-saw of beliefs and commitments lies the main story of our time. And to ask what happened in the 30's is only a way of asking what is happening today.

The going version of the story is that the radical spirit ruled the 30's while the 40's and 50's were dedicated to conservatism, philistinism, chauvinism, and that now the pendulum is swinging once more to the left. This picture is really too simple, and comes out of the sentimental association of radicalism with purity. It ignores the unsavory side of the radical movement, brought mostly by the Communists, just as it leaves out the legitimate distaste for party-line thinking that originally led many people to break with ideas and organizations linked to the Com-

munists. Still, the going version of the story does contain a certain amount of truth. The fact is that despite all the illusions and duplicities of the 30's, it was a time when human aims seemed more attractive than national goals and when articulate people talked more about the hope for an ideal society than the benefits of the existing one. It was a time when responsibility meant responsibility to ideas and convictions, justice seemed more important than expediency, the greater good meant more than the lesser evil, dreams seemed more cogent than reality.

Mostly, the 30's was a period of contradictions. It was a time of sense and nonsense, idealism and cynicism, morality and immorality, disinterestedness and power drive, and it was a time when it was possible to believe simultaneously in democracy and dictatorship, in an anti-human abstraction called History and in a moral idea of man usually regarded as unhistorical. It seemed possible to believe in everything and its opposite; and a theory of dialectics along with a politics of expediency were used to rationalize the untenable and justify the reprehensible.

If we are content to itemize these pluses and minuses and to reiterate that they add up to a state of contradiction, it is not so difficult to say what happened in the 30's, and what has happened since then. The trouble starts when we try to figure out the exact relation of sense to nonsense, of right to wrong, both in the radical tradi-

WILLIAM PHILLIPS, co-editor and co-founder of *Partisan Review*, played a significant part in the literary-political battles of radical writers in the period under discussion.

tion and in the swing away from it toward the center and the right. For this means we must decide whether the radicalism of the 30's was an aberration or a movement in the main line of history, or both, and whether the anti-radical mood that followed was a reaction against being taken in or a reconciliation with things as they are. What we think of these periods has to do as much with the future as with the past.

ONE COULD deal with such problems systematically. But I have been struck, from the beginning, by a question that gets to the heart of the subject: how the radical movement in this country—which included not only the Communists but all the splinter groups on the left—could at the same time be so marginal, so parochial, so mindless, and also so relevant and so central. I am thinking mostly of the literary and intellectual side of the radical movement—which could take Mike Gold, Jack Conroy, and Edwin Seaver as important writers—though I am not exempting completely its politics, which resembled most of the other great radical movements of the past in everything except the level and subtlety of its thinking. Despite the sweep of its ideas, despite the fact that the radical movement—rightly or wrongly, it does not matter—addressed itself to the major issues of modern life, in America it always seemed alien and off-beat, like some avant-garde tendency that had not yet become respectable. There was an enormous incongruity between the claims of the left to relevance, centrality, universality, and the sectarian crudity of almost everything it said and did. People who spoke for the future had the most shaky relation to the present.

An example of this incongruity is the John Reed Clubs. The John Reed Clubs were supposed to be organizations of left-wing writers and artists, scattered throughout the country. But they were made up mostly of aspiring writers and artists, part of the army of magazine rejectees, and of

cultural functionaries who tried to overcome their creative frustrations by attending endless meetings and making passionate speeches about such unreal subjects as the "culture" of the working class. Yet most accounts of the 30's miss this peculiar, almost pathetic, combination of deception and self-deception, this perpetual activity which not only furthered the doctrines of the Communists but also filled the lives of people who found their way to art through politics, by all kinds of cultural bustling. Richard Wright's account in *The God That Failed* of the convention of the John Reed Clubs in Chicago is an instance of the failure to convey the tone of the organization. As Wright tells it, the story of the convention sounds like an epic of soul-searchings and heroic statements about art and society. The truth is that the result of the meeting, the disbanding of the John Reed Clubs, was decided in advance; and most of the speeches one after another either advocated dissolution or recited the non-existent achievements of each club.

One wonders—one even wondered then—whether or how, such people change the world: and for the better?

Incongruities of this sort crop up constantly both in politics and in art. Revolutionary movements usually begin in the wings, in an intellectual ghetto, and the transfer from the marginal to the central is a matter of shifting the balance of power. In art, too, particularly in modern times, the familiar course is from the fringe to the center. It is not simply that a new work gets praised often enough until it becomes a classic; frequently, as in Joyce and Kafka, works that lie solidly in the middle of the tradition were regarded as alien and aberrated when they first appeared. It is as though the main stream must periodically have the look of a creek.

Thus, there would seem to be precedents for the incongruities of the 30's. Yet this was not just another instance of the typical disguised as the marginal, of the sage in the role of the outcast. It was not only the novelty and originality of the left, its genu-

inely radical quality, that gave it an alien look. The fact is there was something alien, something inauthentic, in the crude and sectarian form into which Marxist ideas had been squeezed by the official Communists. This is not to say that the movement was entirely inauthentic; it means that it was not free to make its own mistakes.

In this combination of authentic and inauthentic elements lies the key not only to the 30's but to what is going on today. The mixed character of the left is of course not a secret, but for polemical reasons one or the other part of the mixture usually has been ignored. The right, for example, constantly plays down the authentic side, the legitimacy of revolt; the left, on the other hand, often glosses over breaches of democracy. (A good current example is Cuba: conservatives deny the just goals of the revolution; radicals tend to close their eyes to the injustices.) In the 30's we saw the first, traumatic eruption of these contradictory forces, which insofar as they are free are revolutionary and insofar as they are tied to Soviet interests serve bureaucratic and dictatorial ends. The situation is further complicated by the fact that this country has seceded, more than is commonly assumed, from European thinking. Hence Marxism, which grew out of the European mind, was not able to take on a native accent and thus seemed all the more alien.

FOR A TIME the true character of the 30's was obscured by political bias. Now it is blurred by the opposite tendency: the failure to make distinctions. Today anything in the past, sense and non-sense, of all political shades, is filed away under History, and what with the new interest in the 30's, the machinery of scholarship has been put to work full-time to set the record straight. But frequently those chosen for this task have been scholars whose main qualification is that they know nothing of the period or the subject, and are thus through ignorance endowed with

objectivity. (Objectivity, so far as I can tell, means an inability to make discriminating judgments.) The turn against revolutionary theory, having become a turn against theory, works to idealize raw facts and to break down the distinctions not only between theories but between different kinds of facts. For you can distinguish between facts as well as theories only on the basis of some theories, some assumptions, some idea of the past and of the future. Hence the native suspicion of theory in this country has combined with the reaction against left ideology and with the new academicism to produce bland, homogenized histories of radicalism that sound like retroactive tape-recordings.

Daniel Aaron's recent *Writers on the Left** is freer of these faults than most other histories of the period. I suppose Aaron would be the best choice if one were looking for an intelligent and open-minded historian. His book is a remarkably balanced and fair account of a period that was made up mostly of intellectual infighting. On the theoretical side, Aaron's sober treatment of the question of why so many writers went left, part or all the way, should serve as an antidote to the notion of Communism as nothing but a "conspiracy," bandied about by reactionaries and obsessive anti-Communists—a notion which absolves people from thinking about history. On the factual side, the book is bound to be most valuable as a reference work, particularly to supply the facts for those who want to argue about the meaning of the period.

But the pile-up of the facts gave me the feeling of reliving rather than re-examining or re-thinking the period. What I mean is that in reading the book one is carried back to the feeling of being engaged in a day-to-day way in the hum of things, and one loses one's sense of perspective. This is particularly disturbing to one who, like myself, lived through these events. For, by being thrown back, I was

* Harcourt, Brace & World, 460 pp., \$7.50.

constantly reminded of the claustrophobic excitement and absurdity of the 30's and of my own feeling of wanting to escape the breathless activity that twisted almost everything that counted, without losing the idea of oneself as a radical.

What comes through strongly in Aaron's book is the vulgarity and the idiocy, much more strongly than the idealism, which is taken for granted; and when the idealism does appear in the statements of the leading figures, like Mike Gold or Granville Hicks, it is so loaded with a militant philistinism of the left, almost inevitably so, that one wonders how it could ever have existed in any other form. And since Aaron is committed to a scholarly neutrality, it is difficult for him to separate independent ideas from orthodoxies or from free-lance nonsense that was officially tolerated, and all these things are given equal importance as they are paraded before one in a procession of dates, documents, meetings, arguments. For example, the mixture of native populism and imported Marxism, vulgarized for organizational purposes, that gave Communist rhetoric its characteristic flavor, is put on the same plane as efforts by people like Edmund Wilson and those who wrote for *Partisan Review* to work out a position on their own. Also all kinds of statements, even those made retroactively for purposes of self-justification, like those of Joseph Freeman, are given equal weight. Aaron's seeming lack of bias actually produces a biased view of the 30's, the bias coming from the assumption that something called the "record" is identical with the history.

But there is also an explicit bias—a conventional one—in the assumption that breaking was better than staying in the fold. If there are any heroes and villains, then the villains are those who stuck with the party and the heroes those who eventually saw the light. Hence figures like Max Eastman, Joseph Freeman, Granville Hicks, Dos Passos, come off pretty well, though the fact that none of

them had much to say at that time that might be interesting today is glossed over by Aaron. Actually Aaron's idea of the 30's is currently the most enlightened, liberal view: like an indulgent parent, it sees the 30's as a stage of wildness which one outgrows. Thus by making the frivolous and the serious sides of the 30's indistinguishable from each other, both of them are played down. And by playing down its serious side, its revolutionary side, the failures of the 30's are made to look like lapses in intellectual history.

SINCE WE CANNOT come intellectually unarmed to these questions we must begin with one or another bias. And, paradoxically, we can reach some kind of objectivity only through the power and depth of our bias. My own bias amounts to a polemical position developed in the 30's and one which I am still more or less committed to. This position, shared mostly by a group of young writers associated at that time with *Partisan Review*, was for purity in politics and impurity in literature. Politically, this meant a stand for morality in politics. In literature, it meant a radicalism rooted in tradition and open to experiment, and an awareness that the imagination could not be contained within any orthodoxy. It meant that one could not rule out any literary beliefs or forms as incompatible with socialist aims. For example, T. S. Eliot's ideological conservatism automatically made him taboo in official leftist circles, but to the group around *Partisan Review* he was a major poet, and a revolutionary one, who—as Edmund Wilson put it in *Axel's Castle*—had accomplished in the area of sensibility a breakthrough analogous to Marxism in political thought.

Such a position really amounted to a complete break with the Communists though this was not perhaps so clear at the beginning because the conflict was muffled by practical pressures and by the illusion that the Communists were educable. Generally, we were aware of the party's effects on thinking and writing be-

fore we understood what was wrong politically. As I now see it, it was the inauthenticity of the radical movement that many of us who youthfully were drawn to it turned against. The accepted view of the 30's, and one that Aaron shares, is that Marxist—or Communist—doctrine was grafted on to native radicalism. But what is usually overlooked is that American radicalism was of a very special kind. It was essentially populist, insular, anti-intellectual; and most of its standard-bearers had a characteristically rough-and-ready American style.

The earlier figures, like Eugene Debs, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Max Haywood, Floyd Dell, were particularly home-grown in their outlook and their tone. But it is most significant that even later writers, like John Reed, Mike Gold, Max Eastman, and Joseph Freeman, did not break with the grass-roots tradition, and some of them—Mike Gold, for example—actively promoted it. In effect, then, the radical movement in the 30's, particularly in the arts, got its accent from the more primitive, egalitarian, plain-speaking strains in American culture.

Now we know that there have been two dominant strains in American culture, and in choosing the "folk" tradition while repudiating the "intellectual" one, the radical movement was taking a political as well as a literary stand. And why, one must ask, did it take that stand? After all, the Marxist movement was nothing if not ideological, full of historical portents and meanings and connections. It actually was a haven for people who preferred theories to facts; and much of the resistance to Marxism in this country came from the native empirical, anti-ideological temper. It seems to me, therefore, that if the radical movement had been permitted to follow its natural course it would never have become entangled with the free-wheeling, grass roots tradition. It would have been urban, intellectual, and critical, as it was in the writings of Marx and Engels, and even later in

Plekhanov and Lukacs. And I think left-wing writers on their own would have come to terms with literary tradition instead of rejecting it outright or latching on to its crudest expressions. They would at least have tried to relate themselves to the most advanced, the most "radical" (in a literary sense) figures and currents: to Joyce and to Kafka rather than to Jack London and Upton Sinclair, to the School of Paris and not to our domestic naturalists. Who knows?—we might have been spared all those proletarian novels and pictures of workers that made a principle of amateurism and banality. But the movement was not a free one; and in the end it must be said that the needs of the Communist party determined the literary course of American radicalism.

WHY THIS WAS so is not entirely clear. But it does seem natural for a bureaucracy to celebrate the "culture" of the common man, partly as a compensation for control and also as a means of creating the illusion of freedom. An undemocratic organization favors the rise to power of bureaucratic types who out of ignorance or envy encourage a contempt for intellectual traditions. As one re-reads some of the salutes to illiteracy quoted in Aaron's book, all in the name of democracy, one is struck by the fact that this was really an assault on the "establishment." Personal and party interests came together in this alliance of functionaries with writers who were not successful and amateurs who became writers by joining literary clubs and parading as spokesmen for the working class. Behind the crude esthetics lay the question of power.

Power meant organizational control and manipulation of people and ideas. But it also took a negative form: the resistance tended to be expressed in literary dissidence. For dissidence made itself felt through a criticism of crude, agitational, populist slogans—like the idea of art as a weapon, or that of proletarian art—and in an insistence that

art be separated from party politics. Most dissidents did not go along with the rejection of past culture as "bourgeois" culture, nor did they accept the orthodox notion that "tradition" was the baggage of reactionaries. Of course, their idea of tradition was a selective one, but only the academy thinks of tradition as the sum of all the values and works of the past, to be taken over intact by new periods and writers. Each new work and each new idea is subversive, but instead of destroying all links with the past it creates new links. "Tradition" is an ever-changing sense of the past, a retro-active revolution.

In this respect, all radical literary movements are alike, whether or not they are tied to a radical politics. And one need hardly point out again that most of the literature of the last hundred years was rooted in a criticism of society or in some idea of revolt, or in some utopian principle. Sometimes, as in a writer like Zola, for example, the connections were explicit; in someone like Rimbaud, the legendary *revolté*, the radical break is expressed through a derangement of reality. In any case the assertion of the new rearranges but does not deny the past. And within the Communist movement it was the arch-dissident, Trotsky, who came out for this principle of radical continuity. He not only dismissed the whole idea of proletarian art as a bureaucratic myth, but he also said he believed, in opposition to official doctrine, that all radical literary movements in this period were bound to be bohemian and avant-garde.

As I see it, this was the conflict on the left in the 30's: the conflict between a free-floating radical spirit and a historical force that both channeled it and throttled it. But this was not only the literary conflict; it was also the heart of the political one. For the Communist movement killed the *idea* of socialism for western intellectuals at the same time that it planted it in masses of people throughout the world. Hence to be a revolutionary

socialist in America or Europe meant being a utopian and having nothing to do with power, while to be a socialist in Latin America, for example, meant being related to power and dissociated from any traditional—or utopian—ideals of the free mind. It is much easier to be an authentic radical when one is not tempted by power. What ultimately compromised the idea of socialism was the possibility of putting it into practice, and almost immediately the question raised by the character of the Soviet Union was whether the lack of democracy was accidental or inevitable.

IF MUCH OF the history of the left has been obscured, it has been because many beliefs held in the 30's were abandoned without being refuted. They were simply assumed to be false though no one bothered to cite the proof. The proof was in the air, and the new generations just inhaled it, along with all the other advanced ideas that were taken for granted. This is one reason why the revival of left-wing attitudes today has brought confusion.

Actually, the enthusiasm for socialism that flourished in the 30's waned quite slowly, as we went through several stages of skepticism and disaffection. The first shock came with the discovery that the new utopia was a dictatorship. The disillusionment reached its peak during the purges and the Moscow trials. But for some years the disaffection was with the Russian variety rather than with the principle of socialism. The question whether this was the natural form a socialist movement must take once it seizes power was simply never resolved. What happened instead was that the anti-Communist recoil was so strong and the possibility of creating a free socialist movement so weak that the concern with socialism began to wither away. After a time it was just assumed that the verdict of history was in—against socialism. And, as we can now see, the anti-Communist mood merged with a growing acceptance of the life of this country, and of the West, as a

whole. Content does not usually stimulate radical feelings; and any discontent that could not be repressed was diffused into concern with the human condition, as in existentialism, or transformed into sexual revolt, which has become the rebellious mode of our time. Socialism—indeed any form of radicalism—was assumed to be a doctrine for those romantics who were either too young to remember the past or too old to forget it.

THIS, AS WE know, is the way things stood until just a few years ago, when suddenly the intellectual mood became a radical one again. The moderates and conservatives were brushed aside. The thinkers who had presided over the return to the fold were abruptly dismissed as having nothing to say to this period: having played out their role as apologists they could now be installed as the elder statesmen of the status quo. The campuses were teeming with meetings, and marches, and protests, first on the issue of civil rights and then on the issue of nuclear war. And writers began to exhibit again the radical badges of their profession. It looked as though we were back in the 30's.

But there was a big difference: the left was no longer political in the old sense, in the sense of having a vision of a new society, and a theory to support it. The left was concerned not with society but with humanity, or rather with the threat of its annihilation by a nuclear war. The radical movement became a peace movement. There were many reasons for this shift, some having to do with the exhaustion of the old radical tradition and the failure to create a new one, but mostly it was because the spectre of total destruction had made the ordinary problems of social change look academic. This is our paradox. A radical politics requires a sense of stability and continuity, a span of time, and, ironically, this is precisely what the new weapons have destroyed. You can no longer transform society in time of war—in the time, that is, between the launch-

ing and landing of a missile; nor can you transform it in time of peace, for then you might risk the possibility of war, without disturbing the delicate balance of terror on which peace depends.

History has a remarkable way of providing—in a Hegelian sense—the necessary (though not always the right) force for the moment. And the peace movement looks like just such an inevitable force. It seems almost as though all the bottled up feelings of wide-eyed hope and fear in the era of the missile have exploded into the "peace movement;" and through its very chaos, its spontaneity, its amateurism, the peace movement as a whole expresses the unusual combination of utopianism and practicality so typical of political idealism today.

In another way, however, the 60's do mark a return to the problem of the 30's, but turned inside out. For the 60's, like the 30's, are concerned with the revolutionary assault on existing society promoted by the Soviet Union, but this time the assault relies as much on military power as on political manipulation. As in the 30's, the prescription for change is in the Marxist critique of capitalism, and in an ideology for liberation and technological fulfillment for backward societies. But the important difference is that in the 30's choices presented themselves in organizational forms; and Western intellectuals felt they had to define themselves in relation to parties and movements, to organized zealots who talked in the name of history. Today, however, it might be said that we face history directly. For one thing, the power of the Soviet Union is such that the ideology of the state has taken the place of the ideology of the party. But more important is the fact that revolutionary change throughout the world is a reality, not just a threat, that haunts the West. And if there should be no war, the so-called peaceful competition between West and East is really very little more than an enactment on a global scale of the intellectual arguments of the

30's. One is dazzled to see in official form what used to be the problems of an intellectual underground: today for example, the American government must actually cope in Latin America with the old factional, intra-mural questions of whether a backward country could solve its problems under an enlightened capitalism, and if not, whether a revolutionary regime could preserve democratic forms.

The *avante-garde* questions of the 30's have become the mass questions of today, and, as has happened frequently in matters of culture, Western intellectuals have lost their particular stake in them. The politics of the intellectuals has become the politics of governments, which means that intellectuals today have no independent politics. Practical intellectuals are busy telling the government how to use its power; impractical ones are trying to get the government to give up its power—by disarmament.

BUT WHATEVER the continuity of radical politics, there seems to be no continuity in literature. For the unnatural situation of the 30's cannot be duplicated; and even the Communist countries, particularly Poland, are having difficulty holding on to the notion that art is a branch of politics. If the literary radicalism of the 30's had any lasting effect in this country, it was mainly to reinforce the populist, egalitarian, anti-intellectual attitudes so deeply rooted in American history. Most of all what the left did was to make intellectually respectable popular attitudes that literature in the past had either attacked or ignored. In the 20's, we recall, writing found most of its excitement in being alienated, advanced, experimental. There were exceptions, of course, but most writing was anti-social, anti-philistine, unpolitical; much of it was by liberal standards reactionary; and it carried the *elan* of a minority, as it snubbed the idea of audience and was impatient with the idea that literature was, along with politics, civil liberties,

and housing, part of a general good.

If we think of the era before the left took over as being dominated or expressed by such writers as Proust, Joyce, Mann, Lawrence, it becomes evident that, beginning with the 30's, there has been a major shift of sensibility. All of these figures, now dangling like classics, created large, unified visions, of the kind no longer sought after by writers; and the reason, I think, is that the opposition of contemporary writing to contemporary life takes place within the accepted world, while the writers of the earlier period were really creating another, self-contained system. Of Lawrence or Joyce or Kafka, for example, it can be said that each in his own way was constructing some ideal consciousness, some pure vision that was not only revolutionary but also messianic, and was rooted in the assumption of a moral and intellectual elite. In a Nietzschean sense, literature was conceived as an act of breaking through the accepted categories: which is why so much writing of the 20's was anti-naturalist, mythic, obsessive, and ultimately moral in its search for a new kind of wholeness and authenticity. If we compare Gide's or Proust's handling of a perverse theme with that of Nabokov, what strikes us most is that Proust, by transforming the theme, treated it as part of the human condition, and Gide turned it into a moral conflict between one's nature and one's responsibilities. Nabokov, on the other hand, handles a morally subversive theme as though it were odd but not unacceptable, and he gives it an air of normality by using a picaresque form and a prose so smooth and facile that it makes *Lolita* sound like another funny story. Similarly, most new fiction—and many of the new movies—give the impression of having broken through the sexual taboos. But here, too, the point is that both the fiction and the movies are simply reflecting free-wheeling habits already taken for granted in more advanced circles.

It is difficult—and risky—to generalize

about these trends. But I do think it can be said that after the 30's writing took to greater realism in style and theme, to smaller subjects, to more recognizable worlds. Quality aside, an important difference is that writing now is continuous with a common experience while in the past it might almost be said that writing competed with experience. There have been, of course, exceptions like Faulkner, who out of detachment wrote as though nothing had changed, or someone like E. M. Forster, who links the past with the present. Then, too, of contemporary Americans, Saul Bellow's fiction has its own boundaries, and writers like Norman Mailer, Bernard Malamud, or Mary McCarthy are by no means the naturalists they are sometimes taken to be. Recently, too, the trend has shown signs of reversal: Beckett and Genet (in their plays) remind us of the earlier generalizations of experience which could be at once true and unreal, and whose energy lay in a kind of warped idealism. The new novelists in France, whom I do not find very exciting, also are attempting to break with common assumptions through a new style of observation, a so-called higher objectivity.

WHAT I AM suggesting is that the radical movement of the 30's broke the radical spirit of literature by lowering its sights and making it more palatable for popular consumption. And, in this country, at least, the process of intellectual domestication fits in with the growing middle-class market for culture. The new audience for books and magazines, which was earnest, progressive, freed from moral and sexual taboos, overcivilized and undereducated—this new monster of consumption required the most serious and the best writing so long as it did not go beyond the limits of its experience and imagination. This is the tyranny of the enlightened audience. But it was not simply a commercial alliance between producer and consumer: the idea of the audience is an old standby of populists,

reformers, and educators, and it was given a stamp of approval by the forces of the left in the 30's. One is, of course, tempted to say that this tyranny of the audience got its political impetus from the perversions of the left, and is not inherent in socialist doctrine. Still, the modern idea of progress does contain a belief in cultural improvement, and this means cultural servicing which, in turn, creates the shape and power of the audience.

One must conclude that radical literature reaches for an ideal rather than a *real* audience, for the *real* audience whether commercially or, as in Russia, politically manipulated, or simply formed by the inertia of the culture, tends to house-break writers and preserve the illusion that the culture is all of a piece. The ideal audience, on the other hand, is constantly being recreated, and is continuous not with itself but with the history of new writing and new ideas. This is why the darlings of a kept audience rarely survive.

It now looks as though a radical literature and a radical politics must be kept apart. For radical politics of the modern variety has really served as an antidote to literature. The moral hygiene, the puritanism, the benevolence, the rationalism—all the virtues that sprout on the left—work like a cure for the perverse and morbid idealism of the modern writer. If writing is to be thought of as radical it must be in a deeper sense, in the sense not simply of cutting across the grain of contemporary life but also of reaching for the connections between the real and the forbidden and the fantastic. The classic example is Dostoyevski, who, by connecting human with historical logic, found a moral thread running through the psychology of crime and the politics of revolution.

Maybe the lesson of the 30's is that radical politics has not been able to escape the dilemma of being distorted by power or left hanging without power, while literature to be radical need not—perhaps cannot—be tied to radical politics.

YENTL THE YESHIVA BOY

A Story

AFTER HER FATHER'S death, Yentl had no reason to remain in Yanev. She was all alone in the house. To be sure, lodgers were willing to move in and pay rent; and the marriage brokers flocked to her door with offers from Lublin, Tomaszew, Zamosc. But Yentl didn't want to get married. Inside her, a voice repeated over and over: "No!" What becomes of a girl when the wedding's over? Right away she starts bearing and rearing. And her mother-in-law lords it over her. Yentl knew she wasn't cut out for a woman's life. She couldn't sew, she couldn't knit. She let the food burn and the milk boil over; her Sabbath pudding never turned out right, and her *challah* dough didn't rise. Yentl much preferred men's activities to women's. Her father Reb Todros, may he rest in peace, during many bedridden years had studied Torah with his daughter as if she were a son. He told Yentl to lock the doors and drape the windows, then together they pored over the Pentateuch, the Mishnah, the Gemara, and the Commentaries. She had proved so apt a pupil that her father used to say:

"Yentl—you have the soul of a man."

"So why was I born a woman?"

"Even Heaven makes mistakes."

There was no doubt about it, Yentl was unlike any of the girls in Yanev—tall, thin, bony, with small breasts and narrow hips. On Sabbath afternoons, when her father slept, she would dress up in his trousers,

his fringed garment, his silk coat, his skull-cap, his velvet hat, and study her reflection in the mirror. She looked like a dark, handsome young man. There was even a slight down on her upper lip. Only her thick braids showed her womanhood—and if it came to that, hair could always be shorn. Yentl conceived a plan and day and night she could think of nothing else. No, she had not been created for the noodle board and the pudding dish, for chattering with silly women and pushing for a place at the butcher's block. Her father had told her so many tales of yeshivas, rabbis, men of letters! Her head was full of Talmudic disputations, questions and answers, learned phrases. Secretly, she had even smoked her father's long pipe.

Yentl told the dealers she wanted to sell the house and go to live in Kallish with an aunt. The neighborhood women tried to talk her out of it, and the marriage brokers said she was crazy, that she was more likely to make a good match right here in Yanev. But Yentl was obstinate. She was in such a rush that she sold the house to the first bidder, and let the furniture go for a song. All she realized from her inheritance was one hundred and forty rubles. Then late one night in the month of Av, while Yanev slept, Yentl cut off her braids, arranged side-locks at her temples, and dressed herself in her father's clothes. Packing underclothes, phylacteries, and a few books into a straw suitcase, she started off on foot for Lublin.

On the main road, Yentl got a ride in a carriage that took her as far as Zamosc. From there, she again set out on foot. She stopped at an inn along the way, and gave her name there as Anshel, after an uncle who had died. The inn was crowded with

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young men journeying to study with famous rabbis. An argument was in progress over the merits of various yeshivas, some praising those of Lithuania, others claiming that study was more intensive in Poland and the board better. It was the first time Yentl had ever found herself alone in the company of young men. How different their talk was from the jabbering of women, she thought, but she was too shy to join in. One young man discussed a prospective match and the size of the dowry, while another, parodying the manner of a Purim rabbi, declaimed a passage from the Torah, adding all sorts of lewd interpretations. After a while, the company proceeded to contests of strength. One pried open another's fist; a second tried to bend a companion's arm. One student, dining on bread and tea, had no spoon and stirred his cup with his penknife. Presently, one of the group came over to Yentl and poked her in the shoulder:

"Why so quiet? Don't you have a tongue?"

"I have nothing to say."

"What's your name?"

"Anshel."

"You *are* bashful. A violet by the way-side."

And the young man tweaked Yentl's nose. She would have given him a smack in return, but her arm refused to budge. She turned white. Another student, slightly older than the rest, tall and pale, with burning eyes and a black beard, came to her rescue.

"Hey, you, why are you picking on him?"

"If you don't like it, you don't have to look."

"Want me to pull your sidelocks off?"

The bearded young man beckoned to Yentl, then asked where she came from and where she was going. Yentl told him she was looking for a yeshiva, but wanted a quiet one. The young man pulled at his beard.

"Then come with me to Bechev."

He explained that he was returning to Bechev for his fourth year. The yeshiva there was small, with only thirty students, and the people in the town provided board for them all. The food was plentiful and the housewives darned the students' socks and took care of their laundry. The Bechev rabbi, who headed the yeshiva, was a genius. He could pose ten questions and answer all ten

with one proof. Most of the students eventually found wives in the town.

"Why did you leave in the middle of the term?" Yentl asked.

"My mother died. Now I'm on my way back."

"What's your name?"

"Avigdor."

"How is it you're not married?"

The young man scratched his beard.

"It's a long story."

"Tell me."

Avigdor covered his eyes and thought a moment.

"Are you coming to Bechev?"

"Yes."

"Then you'll find out soon enough anyway. I was engaged to the only daughter of Alter Vishkower, the richest man in town. Even the wedding date was set when suddenly they sent back the engagement contract."

"What happened?"

"I don't know. Gossips, I guess, were busy spreading tales. I had the right to ask for half the dowry, but it was against my nature. Now they're trying to talk me into another match, but the girl doesn't appeal to me."

"In Bechev, yeshiva boys look at women?"

"At Alter's house, where I ate once a week, Hadass, his daughter, always brought in the food. . . ."

"Is she good-looking?"

"She's blond."

"Brunettes can be good-looking too."

"No."

Yentl gazed at Avigdor. He was lean and bony with sunken cheeks. He had curly sidelocks so black they appeared blue, and his eyebrows met across the bridge of his nose. He looked at her sharply with the regretful shyness of one who has just divulged a secret. His lapel was rent, according to the custom for mourners, and the lining of his gaberdine showed through. He drummed restlessly on the table and hummed a tune. Behind the high furrowed brow his thoughts seemed to race. Suddenly he spoke:

"Well, what of it. I'll become a recluse, that's all."

IT WAS STRANGE, but as soon as Yentl—or Anshel—arrived in Bechev, she was allotted one day's board a week at the house of that same rich man, Alter Vishkower, whose

daughter had broken off her betrothal to Avigdor.

The students at the yeshiva studied in pairs, and Avigdor chose Anshel for a partner. He helped her with the lessons. He was also an expert swimmer and offered to teach Anshel the breast stroke and how to tread water, but she always found excuses for not going down to the river. Avigdor suggested that they share lodgings, but Anshel found a place to sleep at the house of an elderly widow who was half blind. Tuesdays, Anshel ate at Alter Vishkower's and Hadass waited on her. Avigdor always asked many questions: "How does Hadass look? Is she sad? Is she gay? Are they trying to marry her off? Does she ever mention my name?" Anshel reported that Hadass upset dishes on the tablecloth, forgot to bring the salt, and dipped her fingers into the plate of grits while carrying it. She ordered the servant girl around, was forever engrossed in storybooks, and changed her hairdo every week. Moreover, she must consider herself a beauty, for she was always in front of the mirror, but, in fact, she was not that good-looking.

"Two years after she's married," said Anshel, "she'll be an old bag."

"So she doesn't appeal to you?"

"Not particularly."

"Yet if she wanted you, you wouldn't turn her down."

"I can do without her."

"Don't you have evil impulses?"

The two friends, sharing a lectern in a corner of the study house, spent more time talking than learning. Occasionally Avigdor smoked, and Anshel, taking the cigarette from his lips, would have a puff. Avigdor liked baked flatcakes made with buckwheat, so Anshel stopped at the bakery every morning to buy one, and wouldn't let him pay his share. Often Anshel did things that greatly surprised Avigdor. If a button came off Avigdor's coat, for example, Anshel would arrive at the yeshiva the next day with needle and thread and sew it back on. Anshel bought Avigdor all kinds of presents: a silk handkerchief, a pair of socks, a muffler. Avigdor grew more and more attached to this boy, five years younger than himself, whose beard hadn't even begun to sprout. Once Avigdor said to Anshel:

"I want you to marry Hadass."

"What good would that do *you*?"

"Better you than a total stranger."

"You'd become my enemy."

"Never."

Avigdor liked to go for long walks through the town and Anshel frequently joined him. Engrossed in conversation, they would go off to the water mill, or to the pine forest, or to the crossroads where the Christian shrine stood. Sometimes they stretched out on the grass.

"Why can't a woman be like a man?"

Avigdor asked once, looking up at the sky.

"How do you mean?"

"Why couldn't Hadass be just like you?"

"How like me?"

"Oh—a good fellow."

Anshel grew playful. She plucked a flower and tore off the petals one by one. She picked up a chestnut and threw it at Avigdor. Avigdor watched a ladybug crawl across the palm of his hand. After a while he spoke up:

"They're trying to marry me off."

Anshel sat up instantly.

"To whom?"

"To Feitl's daughter, Peshe."

"The widow?"

"That's the one."

"Why should you marry a widow?"

"No one else will have me."

"That's not true. Someone will turn up for you."

"Never."

Anshel told Avigdor such a match was bad. Peshe was neither good-looking nor clever, only a cow with a pair of eyes. Besides, she was bad luck, for her husband died in the first year of their marriage. Such women were husband-killers. But Avigdor did not answer. He lit a cigarette, took a deep puff, and blew out smoke rings. His face had turned green.

"I need a woman. I can't sleep at night."

Anshel was startled.

"Why can't you wait until the right one comes along?"

"Hadass was my destined one."

And Avigdor's eyes grew moist. Abruptly he got to his feet.

"Enough lying around. Let's go."

AFTER THAT, everything happened quickly. One day Avigdor was confiding his problem to Anshel, two days later he became engaged

to Peshe, and brought honey cake and brandy to the yeshiva. An early wedding date was set. When the bride-to-be is a widow, there's no need to wait for a trousseau. Everything is ready. The groom, moreover, was an orphan and no one's advice had to be asked. The yeshiva students drank the brandy and offered their congratulations. Anshel also took a sip, but promptly choked on it.

"Oy, it burns!"

"You're not much of a man," Avigdor teased.

After the celebration, Avigdor and Anshel sat down with a volume of the Gemara, but they made little progress, and their conversation was equally slow. Avigdor rocked back and forth, pulled at his beard, muttered under his breath.

"I'm lost," he said abruptly.

"If you don't like her, why are you getting married?"

"I'd marry a she-goat."

The following day Avigdor did not appear at the study house. Feitl the Leatherdealer belonged to the Hasidim and he wanted his prospective son-in-law to continue his studies at the Hasidic prayer house. The yeshiva students said privately that though there was no denying the widow was short and round as a barrel, her mother the daughter of a dairyman, her father half an ignoramus, still the whole family was filthy with money. Feitl was part-owner of a tannery; Peshe had invested her dowry in a shop that sold herring, tar, pots and pans, and was always crowded with peasants. Father and daughter were outfitting Avigdor and had placed orders for a fur coat, a cloth coat, a silk *kapote*, and two pair of boots. In addition, he had received many gifts immediately, things that had belonged to Peshe's first husband: the Vilna edition of the Talmud, a gold watch, a Chanukah candelabra, a spice box. Anshel sat alone at the lectern. On Tuesday when Anshel arrived for dinner at Alter Vishkower's house, Hadass remarked:

"What do you say about your partner—back in clover, isn't he?"

"What did you expect—that no one else would want him?"

Hadass reddened.

"It wasn't my fault. My father was against it."

"Why?"

"Because they found out a brother of his had hanged himself."

Anshel looked at her as she stood there—tall, blond, with a long neck, hollow cheeks, and blue eyes, wearing a cotton dress and a calico apron. Her hair, fixed in two braids, was flung back over her shoulders. A pity I'm not a man, Anshel thought.

"Do you regret it now?" Anshel asked.

"Oh, yes!"

Hadass fled from the room. The rest of the food, meat dumplings and tea, was brought in by the servant girl. Not until Anshel had finished eating and was washing her hands for the Final Blessings did Hadass reappear. She came up to the table and said in a smothered voice:

"Swear to me you won't tell him anything. Why should he know what goes on in my heart! . . ."

Then she fled once more, nearly falling over the threshold.

THE HEAD OF THE yeshiva asked Anshel to choose another study partner, but weeks went by and still Anshel studied alone. There was no one in the yeshiva who could take Avigdor's place. All the others were small, in body and in spirit. They talked nonsense, bragged about trifles, grinned oafishly, behaved like *shnorrers*. Without Avigdor the study house seemed empty. At night Anshel lay on her bench at the widow's, unable to sleep. Stripped of gaberdine and trousers she was once more Yentl, a girl of marriageable age, in love with a young man who was betrothed to another. Perhaps I should have told him the truth, Anshel thought. But it was too late for that. Anshel could not go back to being a girl, could never again do without books and a study house. She lay there thinking outlandish thoughts that brought her close to madness. She fell asleep, then awoke with a start. In her dream she had been at the same time a man and a woman, wearing both a woman's bodice and a man's fringed garment. Yentl's period was late and she was suddenly afraid . . . who knew? In *Medrash Talpioth* she had read of a woman who had conceived merely through desiring a man. Only now did Yentl grasp the meaning of the Torah's prohibition against wearing the clothes of the other sex. By doing so one deceived not only others but also oneself. Even the soul was perplexed,

finding itself incarnate in a strange body.

At night Anshel lay awake; by day she could scarcely keep her eyes open. At the houses where she had her meals, the women complained that the youth left everything on his plate. The rabbi noticed that Anshel no longer paid attention to the lectures but stared out the window lost in private thoughts. When Tuesday came, Anshel appeared at the Vishkower house for dinner. Hadass set a bowl of soup before her and waited, but Anshel was so disturbed she did not even say thank you. She reached for a spoon but let it fall. Hadass ventured a comment:

"I hear Avigdor has deserted you."

Anshel awoke from her trance.

"What do you mean?"

"He's no longer your partner."

"He's left the yeshiva."

"Do you see him at all?"

"He seems to be hiding."

"Are you at least going to the wedding?"

For a moment Anshel was silent as though missing the meaning of the words. Then she spoke:

"He's a big fool."

"Why do you say that?"

"You're beautiful, and the other one looks like a monkey."

Hadass blushed to the roots of her hair.

"It's all my father's fault."

"Don't worry. You'll find someone who's worthy of you."

"There's no one I want."

"But everyone wants you. . . ."

There was a long silence. Hadass' eyes grew larger, filling with the sadness of one who knows there is no consolation.

"Your soup is getting cold."

"I, too, want you."

Anshel was astonished at what she had said. Hadass stared at her over her shoulder.

"What are you saying!"

"It's the truth."

"Someone might be listening."

"I'm not afraid."

"Eat the soup. I'll bring the meat dumpings in a moment."

Hadass turned to go, her high heels clattering. Anshel began hunting for beans in the soup, fished one up, then let it fall. Her appetite was gone; her throat had closed up. She knew very well she was getting entangled in evil, but some force kept urging

her on. Hadass reappeared, carrying a platter with two meat dumplings on it.

"Why aren't you eating?"

"I'm thinking about you."

"What are you thinking?"

"I want to marry you."

Hadass made a face as though she had swallowed something.

"On such matters, you must speak to my father."

"I know."

"The custom is to send a matchmaker."

She ran from the room, letting the door slam behind her. Laughing inwardly, Anshel thought: "With girls I can play as I please!" She sprinkled salt on the soup and then pepper. She sat there lightheaded. What have I done? I must be going mad. There's no other explanation. . . . She forced herself to eat, but could taste nothing. Only then did Anshel remember that it was Avigdor who had wanted her to marry Hadass. From her confusion, a plan emerged: she would exact vengeance for Avigdor, and at the same time, through Hadass, draw him closer to herself. Hadass was a virgin: what did she know about men? A girl like that could be deceived for a long time. To be sure, Anshel too was a virgin but she knew a lot about such matters from the Gemara and from hearing men talk. Anshel was seized by both fear and glee, as a person is who is planning to deceive the whole community. She remembered the saying: "The public are fools." She stood up and said aloud: "Now I'll really start something."

THAT NIGHT Anshel didn't sleep a wink. Every few minutes she got up for a drink of water. Her throat was parched, her forehead burned. Her brain worked away feverishly of its own volition. A quarrel seemed to be going on inside her. Her stomach throbbed and her knees ached. It was as if she had sealed a pact with Satan, the Evil One who plays tricks on human beings, who sets stumbling blocks and traps in their paths. By the time Anshel fell asleep, it was morning. She awoke more exhausted than before. But she could not go on sleeping on the bench at the widow's. With an effort she rose and, taking the bag that held her phylacteries, set out for the study house. On the way whom should she meet but Hadass' father. Anshel bade him a respectful good

morning and received a friendly greeting in return. Reb Alter stroked his beard and engaged her in conversation:

"My daughter Hadass must be serving you leftovers. You look starved."

"Your daughter is a fine girl, and very generous."

"So why are you so pale?"

Anshel was silent for a minute.

"Reb Alter, there's something I must say to you."

"Well, go ahead, say it."

"Reb Alter, your daughter pleases me."

Alter Vishkower came to a halt.

"Oh, does she? I thought yeshiva students didn't talk about such things."

His eyes were full of laughter.

"But it's the truth."

"One doesn't discuss these matters with the young man himself."

"But I'm an orphan."

"Well . . . in that case the custom is to send a marriage broker."

"Yes. . . ."

"What do you see in her?"

"She's beautiful . . . fine . . . intelligent. . . ."

"Well, well, well. . . . Come along, tell me something about your family."

Alter Vishkower put his arm around Anshel and in this fashion the two continued walking until they reached the courtyard of the synagogue.

ONCE YOU say "A," you must say "B." Thoughts lead to words, words lead to deeds. Reb Alter Vishkower gave his consent to the match. Hadass' mother Freyda Leah held back for a while. She said she wanted no more Bechev yeshiva students for her daughter and would rather have someone from Lublin or Zamosc; but Hadass gave warning that if she were shamed publicly once more (the way she had been with Avigdor) she would throw herself into the well. As often happens with such ill-advised matches, everyone was strongly in favor of it—the rabbi, the relatives, Hadass' girl friends. For some time the girls of Bechev had been eyeing Anshel longingly, watching from their windows when the youth passed by on the street. Anshel kept his boots well polished and did not drop his eyes in the presence of women. Stopping in at Beila the Baker's to buy a *pletzl*, he joked with them

in such a worldly fashion that they marveled. The women agreed there was something special about Anshel: his sidelocks curled like nobody else's and he tied his neck scarf differently; his eyes, smiling yet distant, seemed always fixed on some faraway point. And the fact that Avigdor had become betrothed to Feitl's daughter Peshe, forsaking Anshel, had endeared him all the more to the people of the town. Alter Vishkower had a provisional contract drawn up for the betrothal, promising Anshel a bigger dowry, more presents, and an even longer period of maintenance than he had promised Avigdor. The girls of Bechev threw their arms around Hadass and congratulated her. Hadass immediately began crocheting a sack for Anshel's phylacteries, a *challah* cloth, a *matzoh* bag. When Avigdor heard the news of Anshel's betrothal, he came to the study house to offer his congratulations. The past few weeks had aged him. His beard was disheveled, his eyes were red. He said to Anshel:

"I knew it would happen this way. Right from the beginning. As soon as I met you at the inn."

"But it was you who suggested it."

"I know that."

"Why did you desert me? You went away without even saying goodbye."

"I wanted to burn my bridges behind me."

Avigdor asked Anshel to go for a walk. Though it was already past Succoth, the day was bright with sunshine. Avigdor, friendlier than ever, opened his heart to Anshel. Yes, it was true, a brother of his had succumbed to melancholy and hanged himself. Now he too felt himself near the edge of the abyss. Peshe had a lot of money and her father was a rich man, yet he couldn't sleep nights. He didn't want to be a storekeeper. He couldn't forget Hadass. She appeared in his dreams. Every Sabbath when her name occurred in the Havdala prayer, he turned dizzy. Still it was good that Anshel and no one else was to marry her. . . . At least she would fall into decent hands. Avigdor stooped and tore aimlessly at the shriveled grass. His speech was incoherent, like that of a man possessed. Suddenly he said:

"I have thought of doing what my brother did."

"Do you love her *that* much?"

"She's engraved in my heart."

The two pledged their friendship and promised never again to part. Anshel proposed that, after they were both married, they should live next door or even share the same house. They would study together every day, perhaps even become partners in a shop.

"Do you want to know the truth?" asked Avigdor. "It's like the story of Jacob and Benjamin: my life is bound up in your life."

"Then why did you leave me?"

"Perhaps for that very reason."

Though the day had turned cold and windy, they continued to walk until they reached the pine forest, not turning back until dusk when it was time for the Evening Prayer. The girls of Bechev, from their posts at the windows, watched them going by with their arms round each other's shoulders and so engrossed in conversation that they walked through puddles and piles of trash without noticing. Avigdor looked pale, disheveled, and the wind whipped one side-lock about; Anshel chewed his fingernails. Hadass, too, ran to the window, took one look, and her eyes filled with tears. . . .

Events followed quickly. Avigdor was the first to marry. Because the bride was a widow, the wedding was a quiet one, with no musicians, no wedding jester, no ceremonial veiling of the bride. One day Peshe stood beneath the marriage canopy, the next she was back at the shop, dispensing tar with greasy hands. Avigdor prayed at the Hasidic assembly house in his new prayer shawl. Afternoons, Anshel went to visit him and the two whispered and talked until evening. The date of Anshel's wedding to Hadass was set for the Sabbath in Chanukah week, though the prospective father-in-law wanted it sooner. Hadass had already been betrothed once. Besides, the groom was an orphan. Why should he toss about on a makeshift bed at the widow's when he could have a wife and home of his own?

Many times each day Anshel warned herself that what she was about to do was sinful, mad, an act of utter depravity. She was entangling both Hadass and herself in a chain of deception and committing so many transgressions that she would never be able to do penance. One lie followed another. Repeatedly Anshel made up her mind to flee Bechev in time, to put an end to this weird comedy that was more the work of an imp than a

human being. But she was in the grip of a power she could not resist. She grew more and more attached to Avigdor, and could not bring herself to destroy Hadass' illusory happiness. Now that he was married, Avigdor's desire to study was greater than ever, and the friends met twice each day: in the mornings they studied the Gemara and the Commentaries, in the afternoons the Legal Codes with their glosses. Alter Vishkower and Feitl the Leatherdealer were pleased and compared Avigdor and Anshel to David and Jonathan. With all the complications, Anshel went about as though drunk. The tailors took her measurements for a new wardrobe and she was forced into all kinds of subterfuge to keep them from discovering she was not a man. Though the imposture had lasted many weeks, Anshel still could not believe it: How was it possible? Fooling the community had become a game, but how long could it go on? And in what way would the truth come to the surface? Inside, Anshel laughed and wept. She had turned into a sprite brought into the world to mock people and trick them. I'm wicked, a transgressor, a Jeroboam ben Nabat, she told herself. Her only justification was that she had taken all these burdens upon herself because her soul thirsted to study Torah. . . .

AVIGDOR SOON began to complain that Peshe treated him badly. She called him an idler, a *shlemiel*, just another mouth to feed. She tried to tie him to the store, assigned him tasks for which he hadn't the slightest inclination, begrudged him pocket money. Instead of consoling Avigdor, Anshel goaded him on against Peshe. She called his wife an eyesore, a shrew, a miser, and said that Peshe had no doubt nagged her first husband to death and would Avigdor also. At the same time, Anshel enumerated Avigdor's virtues: his height and manliness, his wit, his erudition.

"If I were a woman and married to you," said Anshel, "I'd know how to appreciate you."

"Well, but you aren't. . . ."

Avigdor sighed.

Meanwhile Anshel's wedding date drew near.

On the Sabbath before Chanukah Anshel was called to the pulpit to read from the Torah. The women showered her with rai-

sins and almonds. On the day of the wedding Alter Vishkower gave a feast for the young men. Avigdor sat at Anshel's right hand. The bridegroom delivered a Talmudic discourse, and the rest of the company argued the points, while smoking cigarettes and drinking wine, liqueurs, tea with lemon or raspberry jam. Then followed the ceremony of veiling the bride, after which the bridegroom was led to the wedding canopy that had been set up at the side of the synagogue. The night was frosty and clear, the sky full of stars. The musicians struck up a tune. Two rows of girls held lighted tapers and braided wax candles. After the wedding ceremony the bride and groom broke their fast with golden chicken broth. Then the dancing began and the announcement of the wedding gifts, all according to custom. The gifts were many and costly. The wedding jester depicted the joys and sorrows that were in store for the bride. Avigdor's wife Peshe was one of the guests but, though she was bedecked with jewels, she still looked ugly in a wig that sat low on her forehead, wearing an enormous fur cape, and with traces of tar on her hands that no amount of washing could ever remove. After the Virtue Dance the bride and groom were led separately to the marriage chamber. The wedding attendants instructed the couple in the proper conduct and enjoined them to "be fruitful and multiply."

At daybreak Anshel's mother-in-law and her band descended upon the marriage chamber and tore the bedsheets from beneath Hadass to make sure the marriage had been consummated. When traces of blood were discovered, the company grew merry and began kissing and congratulating the bride. Then, brandishing the sheet, they flocked outside and danced a Kosher Dance in the newly fallen snow. Anshel had found a way to deflower the bride. Hadass in her innocence was unaware that things weren't quite as they should have been. She was already deeply in love with Anshel. It is commanded that the bride and groom remain apart for seven days after the first intercourse. The next day Anshel and Avigdor took up the study of the Tractate on Menstruous Women. When the other men had departed and the two were left to themselves in the synagogue, Avigdor shyly questioned Anshel about his night with Hadass. Anshel

gratified his curiosity and they whispered together until nightfall.

ANSHEL HAD FALLEN into good hands. Hadass was a devoted wife and her parents indulged their son-in-law's every wish and boasted of his accomplishments. To be sure, several months went by and Hadass was still not with child, but no one took it to heart. On the other hand, Avigdor's lot grew steadily worse. Peshe tormented him and finally would not give him enough to eat and even refused him a clean shirt. Since he was always penniless, Anshel again brought him a daily buckwheat cake. Because Peshe was too busy to cook and too stingy to hire a servant, Anshel asked Avigdor to dine at his house. Reb Alter Vishkower and his wife disapproved, arguing that it was wrong for the rejected suitor to visit the house of his former fiancée. The town had plenty to talk about. But Anshel cited precedents to show that it was not prohibited by the Law. Most of the townspeople sided with Avigdor and blamed Peshe for everything. Avigdor soon began pressing Peshe for a divorce, and, because he did not want to have a child by such a bitch, he acted like Onan, or, as the Gemara translates it: he threshed on the inside and cast his seed without. He confided in Anshel, told him how Peshe came to bed unwashed and snored like a buzz saw, of how she was so occupied with the cash taken in at the store that she babbled about it even in her sleep.

"Oh, Anshel, how I envy you," he said.

"There's no reason for envying me."

"You have everything. I wish your good fortune were mine—with no loss to you, of course."

"Everyone has troubles of his own."

"What sort of troubles do *you* have? Don't tempt Providence."

How could Avigdor have guessed that Anshel could not sleep at night and thought constantly of running away? Lying with Hadass and deceiving her had become more and more painful. Hadass' love and tenderness shamed her. The devotion of her mother- and father-in-law and their hopes for a grandchild were a burden. On Friday afternoons all of the townspeople went to the baths and every week Anshel had to find a new excuse. But this was beginning to awake suspicions. There was talk that Anshel

must have an unsightly birthmark, or a rupture, or perhaps was not properly circumcised. Judging by the youth's years, his beard should certainly have begun to sprout, yet his cheeks remained smooth. It was already Purim and Passover was approaching. Soon it would be summer. Not far from Bechev there was a river where all the yeshiva students and young men went swimming as soon as it was warm enough. The lie was swelling like an abscess and one of these days it must surely burst. Anshel knew she had to find a way to free herself.

It was customary for the young men boarding with their in-laws to travel to nearby cities during the half-holidays in the middle of Passover week. They enjoyed the change, refreshed themselves, looked around for business opportunities, bought books or other things a young man might need. Bechev was not far from Lublin and Anshel persuaded Avigdor to make the journey with her at her expense. Avigdor was delighted at the prospect of being rid for a few days of the shrew he had at home. The trip by carriage was a merry one. The fields were turning green; storks, back from the warm countries, swooped across the sky in great arcs. Streams rushed toward the valleys. The birds chirped. The windmills turned. Spring flowers were beginning to bloom in the fields. Here and there a cow was already grazing. The companions, chatting, ate the fruit and little cakes that Hadass had packed, told each other jokes, and exchanged confidences until they reached Lublin. There they went to an inn and took a room for two. On the journey, Anshel had promised to reveal an astonishing secret to Avigdor in Lublin. Avigdor had joked: what sort of secret could it be? Had Anshel discovered a hidden treasure? Had he written an essay? By studying the Cabala, had he created a dove? . . . Now they entered the room and while Anshel carefully locked the door, Avigdor said teasingly:

"Well, let's hear your great secret."

"Prepare yourself for the most incredible thing that ever was."

"I'm prepared for anything."

"I'm not a man but a woman," said Anshel. "My name isn't Anshel, it's Yentl."

Avigdor burst out laughing.

"I knew it was a hoax."

"But it's true."

"Even if I'm a fool, I won't swallow this."

"Do you want me to show you?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll get undressed."

Avigdor's eyes widened. It occurred to him that Anshel might want to practice pederasty. Anshel took off the gaberdine and the fringed garment, and threw off her underclothes. Avigdor took one look and turned first white, then fiery red. Anshel covered herself hastily.

"I've done this only so that you can testify at the courthouse. Otherwise Hadass will have to stay a grass widow."

Avigdor had lost his tongue. He was seized by a fit of trembling. He wanted to speak, but his lips moved and nothing came out. He sat down quickly, for his legs would not support him. Finally he murmured:

"How is it possible? I don't believe it!"

"Should I get undressed again?"

"No!"

Yentl proceeded to tell the whole story: how her father, bedridden, had studied Torah with her; how she had never had the patience for women and their silly chatter; how she had sold the house and all the furnishings, left the town, made her way disguised as a man to Lublin, and on the road met Avigdor. Avigdor sat speechless, gazing at the storyteller. Yentl was by now wearing men's clothes once more. Avigdor spoke:

"It must be a dream."

He pinched himself on the cheek.

"It isn't a dream."

"That such a thing should happen to me. . . !"

"It's all true."

"Why did you do it? *Nu*, I'd better keep still."

"I didn't want to waste my life on a baking shovel and a kneading trough."

"And what about Hadass—why did you do that?"

"I did it for your sake. I knew that Peshe would torment you and at our house you would have some peace. . . ."

Avigdor was silent for a long time. He bowed his head, pressed his hands to his temples, shook his head.

"What will you do now?"

"I'll go away to a different yeshiva."

"What? If you had only told me earlier, we could have. . . ."

Avigdor broke off in the middle.

"No—it wouldn't have been good."

"Why not?"

"I'm neither one nor the other."

"What a dilemma I'm in!"

"Get a divorce from that horror. Marry Hadass."

"She'll never divorce me and Hadass won't have me."

"Hadass loves you. She won't listen to her father again."

Avigdor stood up suddenly but then sat down.

"I won't be able to forget you. Ever. . . ."

ACCORDING TO THE LAW Avigdor was now forbidden to spend another moment alone with Yentl; yet dressed in the gaberdine and trousers, she was again the familiar Anshel. They resumed their conversation on the old footing:

"How could you bring yourself to violate the commandment every day: 'A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man'?"

"I wasn't created for plucking feathers and chattering with females."

"Would you rather lose your share in the world to come?"

"Perhaps. . . ."

Avigdor raised his eyes. Only now did he realize that Anshel's cheeks were too smooth for a man's, the hair too abundant, the hands too small. Even so he could not believe that such a thing could have happened. At any moment he expected to wake up. He bit his lips, pinched his thigh. He was seized by shyness and could not speak without stammering. His friendship with Anshel, their intimate talk, their confidences, had been turned into a sham and delusion. The thought even occurred to him that Anshel might be a demon. He shook himself as if to cast off a nightmare; yet that power which knows the difference between dream and reality told him it was all true. He summoned up his courage. He and Anshel could never be strangers to one another, even though Anshel was in fact Yentl. . . . He ventured a comment:

"It seems to me that the witness who testifies for a deserted woman may not marry her, for the Law calls him 'a party to the affair.'"

"What? That didn't occur to me!"

"We must look it up in Ibn Ezer."

"I'm not even sure that the rules pertaining to a deserted woman apply in this case," said Anshel in the manner of a scholar.

"If you don't want Hadass to be a grass widow, you must reveal the secret to her directly."

"That I can't do."

"In any event, you must get another witness."

Gradually the two went back to their Talmudic conversation. It seemed strange at first to Avigdor to be disputing holy writ with a woman, yet before long the Torah had reunited them. Though their bodies were different, their souls were of one kind. Anshel spoke in a singsong, gesticulated with her thumb, clutched her sidelocks, plucked at her beardless chin, made all the customary gestures of a yeshiva student. In the heat of argument she even seized Avigdor by the lapel and called him stupid. A great love for Anshel took hold of Avigdor, mixed with shame, remorse, anxiety. If I had only known this before, he said to himself. In his thoughts he likened Anshel (or Yentl) to Bruria, the wife of Reb Meir, and to Yalte, the wife of Reb Nachman. For the first time he saw clearly that this was what he had always wanted: a wife whose mind was not taken up with material things. . . . His desire for Hadass was gone now, and he knew he would long for Yentl, but he dared not say so. He felt hot and knew that his face was burning. He could no longer meet Anshel's eyes. He began to enumerate Anshel's sins and saw that he too was implicated, for he had sat next to Yentl and had touched her during her unclean days. Nu, and what could be said about her marriage to Hadass? What a multitude of transgressions there! Wilful deception, false vows, misrepresentation!—Heaven knows what else. He asked suddenly:

"Tell the truth, are you a heretic?"

"God forbid!"

"Then how could you bring yourself to do such a thing?"

The longer Anshel talked, the less Avigdor understood. All Anshel's explanations seemed to point to one thing: she had the soul of a man and the body of a woman. Anshel said she had married Hadass only in order to be near Avigdor.

"You could have married me," Avigdor said.

"I wanted to study the Gemara and Commentaries with you, not darn your socks!"

For a long time neither spoke. Then Avigdor broke the silence:

"I'm afraid Hadass will get sick from all this, God forbid!"

"I'm afraid of that too."

"What's going to happen now?"

DUSK FELL AND THE two began to recite the Evening Prayer. In his confusion Avigdor mixed up the blessings, omitted some and repeated others. He glanced sideways at Anshel who was rocking back and forth, beating her breast, bowing her head. He saw her, eyes closed, lift her face to Heaven as though beseeching: You, Father in Heaven, know the truth. . . . When their prayers were finished, they sat down on opposite chairs, facing one another yet a good distance apart. The room filled with shadows. Reflections of the sunset, like purple embroidery, shook on the wall opposite the window. Avigdor again wanted to speak but at first the words, trembling on the tip of his tongue, would not come. Suddenly they burst forth:

"Maybe it's still not too late? I can't go on living with that accursed woman. . . . You. . . ."

"No, Avigdor, it's impossible."

"Why?"

"I'll live out my time as I am. . . ."

"I'll miss you. Terribly."

"And I'll miss you."

"What's the sense of all this?"

Anshel did not answer. Night fell and the light faded. In the darkness they seemed to be listening to each other's thoughts. The Law forbade Avigdor to stay in the room alone with Anshel, but he could not think of her just as a woman. What a strange power there is in clothing, he thought. But he spoke of something else:

"I would advise you simply to send Hadass a divorce."

"How can I do that?"

"Since the marriage sacraments weren't valid, what difference does it make?"

"I suppose you're right."

"There'll be time enough later for her to find out the truth."

The maidservant came in with a lamp but as soon as she had gone, Avigdor put it out. Their predicament and the words which they must speak to one another could not

endure light. In the blackness Anshel related all the particulars. She answered all Avigdor's questions. The clock struck two, and still they talked. Anshel told Avigdor that Hadass had never forgotten him. She talked of him frequently, worried about his health, was sorry—though not without a certain satisfaction—about the way things had turned out with Peshe.

"She'll be a good wife," said Anshel. "I don't even know how to bake a pudding."

"Nevertheless, if you're willing. . . ."

"No, Avigdor. It wasn't destined to be. . . ."

IT WAS ALL a great riddle to the town: the messenger who arrived bringing Hadass the divorce papers; Avigdor's remaining in Lublin until after the holidays; his return to Bechev with slumping shoulders and lifeless eyes as if he had been ill. Hadass took to her bed and was visited by the doctor three times a day. Avigdor went into seclusion. If someone ran across him by chance and addressed him, he did not answer. Peshe complained to her parents that Avigdor paced back and forth smoking all night long. When he finally collapsed from sheer fatigue, in his sleep he called out the name of an unknown female—Yentl. Peshe began talking of a divorce. The town thought Avigdor wouldn't grant her one or would demand money at the very least, but he agreed to everything.

In Bechev the people were not used to having mysteries stay mysteries for long. How can you keep secrets in a little town where everyone knows what's cooking in everyone else's pots? Yet, though there were plenty of persons who made a practice of looking through keyholes and laying an ear to shutters, what happened remained an enigma. Hadass lay in her bed and wept. Chanina the herb doctor reported that she was wasting away. Anshel had disappeared without a trace. Reb Alter Vishkower sent for Avigdor and he arrived, but those who stood straining beneath the window couldn't catch a word of what passed between them. Those individuals who habitually pry into other people's affairs came up with all sorts of theories, but not one of them was consistent.

One party came to the conclusion that Anshel had fallen into the hands of Catholic priests, and had been converted. That might

have made sense. But where could Anshel have found time for the priests, since he was always studying in the yeshiva? And apart from that, since when does an apostate send his wife a divorce?

Another group whispered that Anshel had cast an eye on another woman. But who could it be? There were no love affairs conducted in Bechev. And none of the young women had recently left town—neither a Jewish woman nor a Gentile one.

Somebody else offered the suggestion that Anshel had been carried away by evil spirits, or was even one of them himself. As proof he cited the fact that Anshel had never come either to the bathhouse or to the river. It is well known that demons have the feet of geese. Well, but had Hadass never seen him barefoot? And who ever heard of a demon sending his wife a divorce? When a demon marries a daughter of mortals, he usually lets her remain a grass widow.

It occurred to someone else that Anshel had committed a major transgression and gone into exile in order to do penance. But what sort of transgression could it have been? And why had he not entrusted it to the rabbi? And why did Avigdor wander about like a ghost?

The hypothesis of Tevel the musician was closest to the truth. Tevel maintained that Avigdor had been unable to forget Hadass and that Anshel had divorced her so that his friend would be able to marry her. But was such friendship possible in this world? And in that case, why had Anshel divorced Hadass even before Avigdor divorced Peshe? Furthermore, such a thing can be accomplished only if the wife has been informed of the arrangement and is willing, yet all signs pointed to Hadass' great love for Anshel, and in fact she was ill from sorrow.

One thing was clear to all: Avigdor knew the truth. But it was impossible to get anything out of him. He remained in seclusion and kept silent with an obstinacy that was a reproach to the whole town.

Close friends urged Peshe not to divorce Avigdor, though they had severed all relations and no longer lived as man and wife. He did not even, on Friday night, perform

the *kiddush* blessing for her. He spent his nights either at the study house or at the widow's where Anshel had found lodgings. When Peshe spoke to him he didn't answer, but stood with bowed head. The tradeswoman Peshe had no patience for such goings-on. She needed a young man to help her out in the store, not a yeshiva student who had fallen into melancholy. Someone of that sort might even take it into his head to depart and leave her deserted. Peshe agreed to a divorce.

In the meantime Hadass had recovered, and Reb Alter Vishkower let it be known that a marriage contract was being drawn up. Hadass was to marry Avigdor. The town was agog. A marriage between a man and a woman who had once been engaged and their betrothal broken off was unheard of. The wedding was held on the first Sabbath after Tisha B'Ov, and included all that is customary at the marriage of a virgin: the banquet for the poor, the canopy before the synagogue, the musicians, the wedding jester, the Virtue Dance. Only one thing was lacking: joy. The bridegroom stood beneath the marriage canopy, a figure of desolation. The bride had recovered from her sickness, but had remained pale and thin. Her tears fell into the golden chicken broth. From all eyes the same question looked out: why had Anshel done it?

After Avigdor's marriage to Hadass, Peshe spread the rumor that Anshel had sold his wife to Avigdor for a price, and that the money had been supplied by Alter Vishkower. One young man pondered the riddle at great length until he finally arrived at the conclusion that Anshel had lost his beloved wife to Avigdor at cards, or even on a spin of the Chanukah *dreidl*. It is a general rule that when the grain of truth cannot be found, men will swallow great helpings of falsehood. Truth itself is often concealed in such a way that the harder you look for it, the harder it is to find.

Not long after the wedding, Hadass became pregnant. The child was a boy and those assembled at the circumcision could scarcely believe their ears when they heard the father name his son Anshel.

LEONARD W. LEVY

SCHOOL PRAYERS & THE FOUNDING FATHERS

WHAT WAS THE original intention of the First Amendment's injunction against laws "respecting an establishment of religion"? That question is being asked once again in the wake of the recent Supreme Court decision against the nonsectarian prayer prescribed by the New York State Board of Regents for daily recitation in the schools. The hostile reaction to the decision reveals how little the establishment clause is understood, how welcome to certain groups are the many breaches in the "wall of separation" between religion and government. These breaches are the more easily justified if the Court, as its critics insist, has really misread, indeed perverted, the intentions of the framers of the First Amendment. But the critics are wrong, their history faulty.

No one, of course, would really permit his judgment of a contemporary church-state issue to be determined by an antiquarian examination of the original meaning of the clause against establishments of religion. There is, to be sure, a comforting

assurance in having the authority of the past coincide with present legislative preferences, and it is an old American custom to invoke the names of the framers to buttress an argument. However, it is also an old American custom to dismiss the framers when it becomes clear that they cannot be conscripted into service. After all, one can always argue that what passed for wisdom in their era may very well by now have passed out of date. Even so, few would openly reject the principles on which the Constitution was based.

The principle that government and religion be kept separate is not directly, at least not yet, under attack by the critics of the Court's recent decision. Their tactic is to argue that the purpose of separation was merely to prevent government *preference* of one religious group over another, so as to insure religious liberty for all.

The stakes in the current controversy are large: the question of federal and state aid (as well as tax-supported bus rides) to sectarian schools accounts for much of the Catholics' bitterness against the Court. The school-prayer decision was quickly condemned, for example, by the national Catholic weekly *America*, as a "stupid decision . . . a decision that spits in the face of our history." And William Buckley, Jr., prominent Catholic layman and the editor of the *National Review*, states in his nationally syndicated column, "The First Amendment to the Constitution was not designed to secularize American life, merely to guard against an institutional-

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ized preeminence of a single religion over others on a national scale."

The implied outlawing of Bible-reading, Christmas plays, and religious songs in the public schools, public crèches, and released-time programs, has also united many Protestant spokesmen in similar criticism of the decision, despite their usually outspoken declarations in favor of separation of church and state and against public aid to sectarian schools. Thus, Reinhold Niebuhr, the distinguished Protestant theologian and political liberal, protested that the Court did not follow "what the First Amendment intended." California's Bishop James A. Pike has used even stronger language, charging that the Court's decision "has just deconsecrated the nation." He urged that the decision be overridden by a constitutional amendment which would insert in place of "establishment of religion" in the First Amendment, the phrase "... the establishment of any denomination, sect, or other organized religious association. . . ." The First Amendment, according to Pike, "merely meant to prevent the establishment of a particular religion or the suppression of a particular religion."

This narrow view of the meaning of the establishment clause has also been supported by one of our leading constitutional scholars, Professor Edward S. Corwin, who concluded a sketchy survey of the historical sources by affirming that the Court's interpretation of the First Amendment as making government aid to religion in general unconstitutional is "untrue historically." "In a word," Professor Corwin added, "what the 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment does, and all that it does, is to forbid Congress to give any religious faith, sect, or denomination preferred status. . . . The historical record shows beyond peradventure that the core idea of 'an establishment of religion' comprises the idea of preference; and that any act of public authority favorable to religion in general cannot, without manifest falsification of

history, be brought under the ban of that phrase." Justice Potter Stewart, the only dissenter in the school-prayer case, indicated his agreement with this interpretation when he pointed out that the Court was not confronted by "the establishment of a state church" or an "official religion."

IN DEFENSE OF the Court, and out of respect for history, the erroneous nature of the narrow interpretation of the establishment clause should be exposed. According to that interpretation—as we have seen from the above quotations—the wall of separation was not meant to enjoin the government from fostering religion generally or from helping all such religious groups as are willing to accept government support or aid, whether in the form of tax benefits, promotional activities, or direct subsidy. Now, it is true that the framers did not speak loudly, clearly, and in a single voice on behalf of the broad interpretation adopted by the Court in the school-prayer case. But the preponderance of the evidence certainly supports the broad interpretation as historically more accurate.

Justice Black, the Court's spokesman in the school-prayer case, advanced the broad interpretation in its most authoritative form in the school-bus case of 1947. He then declared:

The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal government can, openly or secretly, participate

in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between Church and State."

The dissenting justices in the school-bus case, while disagreeing with the majority on the question of whether the "wall of separation" had in fact been breached by the practice at issue, nevertheless concurred with the majority view of the intentions of the framers. Justice Rutledge's opinion, which was endorsed by all the dissenting justices, declared:

The Amendment's purpose was not to strike merely at the official establishment of a single sect, creed or religion, outlawing only a formal relation such as had prevailed in England and some of the colonies. Necessarily it was to uproot all such relationships. But the object was broader than separating church and state in this narrow sense. It was to create a complete and permanent separation of the spheres of religious activity and civil authority by comprehensively forbidding every form of public aid or support for religion.

In other words, according to the broad interpretation, even government aid that is impartially and equitably administered to all religious groups is barred by the First Amendment.

THE DEBATE in the First Congress, which drafted the Bill of Rights, provides support neither for the broad nor the narrow interpretation. Yet the drafting history of the clause, in contrast to the debate, is revealing. In the House, the prohibitory phrase was aimed against laws "establishing religion." In the Senate, three motions, each of which clearly expressed a narrow intent, were introduced and defeated. All were explicitly directed against laws preferring one religious "sect" or "denomination" above others. Although their defeat would seem to show that the Senate intended something broader than merely a ban on preference to one sect, it finally did adopt a narrow prohibition: "Congress shall make no law

establishing articles of faith or a mode of worship. . . ." But the Senate's wording provoked the House to clarify its intent; for the House rejected the Senate's article on religion. To resolve the disagreement between the two branches, the House proposed a joint conference committee. The six-man committee—four of whom had been influential members of the constitutional convention—included James Madison as chairman of the House conferees, and Oliver Ellsworth (later Chief Justice) as chairman of the Senate conferees. The House members flatly refused to accept the Senate's version of the amendment on religion, indicating that the House would not be satisfied with merely a ban against the preference of one sect or religion over others. The Senate conferees then abandoned the Senate version, and the amendment was re-drafted to give it the phraseology which has come down to us: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ."

The one fact which stands out from this review of the drafting of the amendment is that Congress very carefully considered and rejected the phraseology which spells out the narrow interpretation. At bottom the amendment was an expression of the intention of the framers of the Constitution to prevent Congress from acting in the field of religion. The "great object" of the Bill of Rights, as Madison explicitly said when introducing his draft of amendments to the House, was to "limit and qualify the powers of Government" for the purpose of making certain that none of the powers granted could be exercised in forbidden fields. And one such forbidden field was religion.

The history of the drafting of the no-establishment clause does not provide a clear understanding of what was meant by the phrase "an establishment of religion." To argue, however, as proponents of the narrow interpretation do, that the amendment permits government aid and support to religion in general or to all churches

without discrimination, leads to the impossible conclusion that the First Amendment *added* to Congress's powers. There is nothing to support this notion. Every bit of evidence we have goes to prove that the First Amendment, like the others, was intended to *restrict* Congress to its enumerated powers. Since Congress was given no power by the Constitutional Convention to legislate on matters concerning religion, and therefore could not support all religious groups nonpreferentially, Congress would have had no such power even in the absence of the First Amendment. It is therefore unreasonable to suppose that an express prohibition of power—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"—vests or creates the power, previously nonexistent, of supporting religion by aid to one or all religious groups. The Bill of Rights, as Madison said, was not framed "to imply powers not meant to be included in the enumeration."

MADISON AND his colleagues were not merely logicians or hair-splitting lawyers. Nor were they abstract theoreticians. If they did not carefully define what they meant by an establishment of religion, the reason is simply that they knew from common experience what they were talking about. At the time of the framing of the First Amendment, six states maintained or authorized establishments of religion. By that amendment, Congress was denied the power to do what those states were doing—and since the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, the states have been included in the ban. "An establishment of religion" meant to the framers what it meant in those states. Thus, reference to the American *experience* with establishments of religion at the time of the framing of the Bill of Rights is essential for any understanding of what the framers intended.

The American experience was in many respects unique, for it did not always follow the pattern of European precedents.

Persons unaware of this fact have arbitrarily assigned to the phrase, "an establishment of religion," its European meaning only. James M. O'Neill, for example, whose *Religion and Education under the Constitution* presents the best argument on behalf of the narrow interpretation of the establishment clause, ignored the American establishments and therefore concluded, in capital letters, that "an establishment of religion" has always and everywhere meant what he found it meant in Europe and in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

A SINGLE CHURCH OR RELIGION ENJOYING FORMAL, LEGAL, OFFICIAL, MONOPOLISTIC PRIVILEGE THROUGH A UNION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE. . . . The phrase has been used this way for centuries in speaking of the established Protestant churches of England, Scotland, Germany, and other countries, and of the established Catholic Church in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere. There is not an item of dependable evidence . . . which shows that the term means, or ever has meant, anything else.

The encyclopedia and the European precedents notwithstanding, there is abundant evidence that the European form of an establishment was not the American form, and that the European meaning of establishment was not the American meaning. The American Revolution triggered a pent-up movement for the separation of church and state. Four states had never experienced establishments of religion. Of the remaining states, three completely abolished their establishments during the Revolution, and the other six—Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia—converted to comprehensive or multiple establishments. Significantly, *every one of the six states explicitly provided that no sect or denomination should be subordinated to any other*; all denominations enjoyed equal status before the law on a wholly nonpreferential basis. It is true that in no state was there an establishment which took in every religion

without exception. Neither Judaism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, nor any religion but a Christian one was ever established in America. In half of the six multiple establishments existing in 1789, Christianity was the established religion; Protestantism was specified in the other half.

In each of the six states where plural establishments existed, they included the churches of *every* denomination and sect with a sufficient number of adherents to form a church. There were probably a few isolated towns or counties in each of the states where the letter of the law was not followed, particularly where a congregation of some sect like the Quakers conscientiously opposed compulsory tax support even of their own church; but such cases were comparatively rare. In general, where Protestantism was established, it was synonymous with religion; there were either no Jews or Catholics, or too few of them to make a difference; and where Christianity was established, as in Maryland which had many Catholics, Jews were scarcely known. It would be a misleading half-truth, therefore, to argue that exclusive establishments of one religion existed in each of the six states; it would miss the novel equalitarianism of the American establishments.

THE PROVISIONS of these six states show beyond doubt that to understand the American meaning of "an establishment of religion," one cannot arbitrarily adopt a definition based on European experience. In every European precedent of an establishment, the religion established was that of a single church. It never happened in any European nation that many different churches, or the religion held in common by all of them—i.e., Christianity or Protestantism—were simultaneously established. Establishments in America, on the other hand, both in the colonial and early state periods, were not limited in nature or in meaning to state support of one church. An establishment of religion

in America at the time of the framing of the Bill of Rights meant government recognition, aid, or sponsorship of religion, principally through impartial or nonpreferential tax support to the churches. The framers of the First Amendment understood "an establishment of religion" to mean what their experience showed them it meant.

Madison, for example, who is known justifiably as the "father of the Constitution and of the Bill of Rights," explicitly characterized as an establishment of religion Virginia's proposed "General Assessment Bill" of 1784, which would have underwritten all the existing churches by the taxes of their adherents. He opposed the bill in principle, not because it did not also provide for the establishment of religious groups that did not then exist in Virginia. Madison's constitutional scruples were so refined on the question of establishments of religion that he regarded as unconstitutional such legal recognition of financial aids as Presidential proclamations of Thanksgiving, tax exemptions for religious societies, chaplains for Congress and the armed services if paid from government funds, incorporation of churches by the federal government in the District of Columbia, and nonpreferential land grants for the support of religion generally. Jefferson shared the same views. As Rector of the University of Virginia, a state-supported institution, he refused to permit Sunday religious services to be performed on university property. And it is not without current interest that as President, Jefferson refused even to designate or recommend a day of thanksgiving or prayer, on the theory that even so innocuous and interdenominational an act violated the establishment clause.

These early Presidents were deeply religious men, but they opposed any government aid, however beneficent and equitable, to religion. They reasoned that religion should remain a voluntary and private matter, the exclusive concern of the individual and his Creator. Any "alli-

ance or coalition between Government and Religion," advised the aged Madison, "cannot be too carefully guarded against." He argued for a "*perfect separation*," believing that "religion and Government will exist in greater purity, without than with the aid of Government."

THUS THE legislative evolution of the establishment clause, the experience with establishments at the time of its drafting, and the opinions of Madison and Jefferson (as well as of other framers) demonstrate the validity of the Supreme Court's interpretation of the original intention of the framers.

The policy of the First Amendment embodies the wisdom gathered from American colonial and European experience. Since that policy, like a vaccine, is preventive in character, and since that wisdom is subtle, the majority, who benefit from it most, often fail to credit the source of their good fortune. Impatiently they dismiss the ancient warnings that the time to take alarm is at the first experiment with their liberties. In the school-prayer case, the Court was quite sensitive to the dangers of such experimentation, but this has unfortunately not always been true of its decisions. From the time that it enunciated the broad interpretation in the school-bus case and yet found no constitutional breach in the wall—provoking Justice Jackson to note that the majority opinion reminded him of Byron's Julia who "whispering, 'I will ne'er consent,'—consented"—the Court has been extremely inconsistent, even erratic, in its interpretation of the establishment clause.

The public, which has little patience with legal distinctions, has a right to be appalled at the contradictory results of the Court's various decisions on the establishment clause: New York's released-time program of religious education for public school children, New Jersey's subsidized bus-rides for parochial school children,

and Massachusetts' Sunday closing or blue laws are not, the Court has ruled, violations of the establishment clause. Yet New York's brief, non-denominational school prayer—"Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country"—the Court has declared unconstitutional. That Justice Black, the author of the school-bus decision (constitutional) is also the author of the school-prayer decision (unconstitutional) only adds to the public's confusion.

Even more confusing is Justice Douglas's record. In his opinion for the Court in the released-time case, he spoke of America as a religious nation "whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being," called approving attention to the many trivial breaches in the wall of separation, and remarked, with seeming sarcasm, that a "fastidious atheist or agnostic could even object to the supplication with which the Court opens each session: "God save the United States and this Honorable Court." Now, in his well-publicized concurring opinion in the school-prayer case, Justice Douglas clearly indicates his belief that that supplication, like the New York Board of Regents prayer, is unconstitutional.

The Court has reaped the scorn of a confused and aroused public because it has been inconsistent; moreover, its past compromises failed to prepare the public for a principled decision. The school-prayer decision, however impolitic, is sound, constitutionally and historically, and has the effect of reinforcing the framers' original injunction against any form of an establishment of religion. One may hope that the Court, having now decided rightly, will shun a policy of appeasement, and that this decision will serve not merely as another incident in a history of vacillation, but as a strong reconnection with the principles and intentions of the framers.

RAY ALAN

FRANCO'S SPAIN & THE NEW EUROPE

HEADLINES IN the Spanish press reported cautiously on July 11: "Reorganization of the Spanish government; General Muñoz Grandes named vice-president." Most Anglo-American papers, from the *New York Times* down, proclaimed: "Franco names successor." More accurately, the *Paris Monde* put the word "successor" in quotes.

Spaniards displayed little overt interest in the shuffle and were unimpressed by the revamped cabinet's policy statement—written, officials agreed, with an eye on the European Economic Community. The change most thoughtful Spaniards believe to be on the horizon would affect the whole regime, not simply a handful of medium-grade ministers. The appointment of General Muñoz Grandes as vice-president merely formalized a transitional arrangement whose existence everyone took for granted; it contributed nothing to resolving the fundamental problem of the Spanish succession. On this score, officials and die-hard supporters of the regime are still apprehensive. The opposition is excited, and making an effort to thrust their tactical and doctrinal differences into the background. Even normally apolitical citizens—the majority—are listening more keenly than ever before to foreign broadcasts. On the other hand, Western diplomats in Madrid are unconvinced that the

regime is approaching its climacteric. Their confidence in its durability is reminiscent of the complacency one encountered in the same quarters in places like Cairo and Baghdad on the eve of revolutionary change.

"Franco is still pretty solid," they say, "and he has no serious challenger." The internal opposition? "Hopelessly divided." The republican exiles? "Nobody wants them back." The army? "Wholly loyal to Franco." The Church? "Getting ready to jump onto the fence, but still supports Franco." The people? "Better off than ever." Might they not be tiring of dictatorship? "The regime here is authoritarian, true; but it's not totalitarian. And it has relaxed a lot in the last three or four years. This isn't Hungary—or Yugoslavia. It's not so very different from de Gaulle's France. . . ."

It is true that nothing could look less like an iron curtain than Spain's welcoming frontiers. If the French authorities happen to be on the lookout for one of their errant colonels, or an itinerant *plastiqueur*, it may well be the French side of the border that is the more suggestive of a police-state. The Spaniards wave you over the line, stamp last week's date on the wrong page of your passport, salute and wish you *buen viaje*. The nature of the regime is never so obtrusive as to offend the nostrils of the millions of tourists who flock there every summer. One gets brief—if frequent—whiffs of authoritarianism rather than an unremitting stench.

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At the entrance to every town and village stands a monumental reproduction in wood or metal of the yoke-and-arrows symbol which the present regime has taken over from the Catholic kings. Slogans and stenciled portraits of General Franco disfigure neat white cottage walls. The slogans are the same from one end of Spain to another, ranging from the merely cretinous *Franco! Franco! Franco!* (which also graces the front cover of Spanish telephone directories) to the sardonic *España Una Grande y Libre*, via the mocking *Arriba España!* In village streets, at major intersections, and in the vicinity of bridges and power stations, civil guards are on patrol in their green uniforms and sinister black hats: grim alien men—Andalusians in the north, northerners in the south, switched to a fresh post every two years or so lest they put down roots and make friends. They are always in pairs, never unarmed. You will see them in village fondas eating a late supper, their backs to the wall, one with a rifle across his knees, the other nursing a tommygun, like troops in an occupied country.

The *Guardia Civil* is not, of course, an invention of General Franco's. It was founded in 1844 and has behaved in other periods like an occupying army. "When a man joins the Civil Guard," Ramón Sender once said, "he declares civil war." But nothing more aptly symbolizes the present regime than this ubiquitous force of brave, ignorant, mistrustful, mistrusted men: their attitude to the "foreign" populations they watch over is precisely that of the regime. Political offenders and strikers are still tried by military tribunals. When the chief of state goes on a provincial tour, suspected republican sympathizers are rounded up by the hundreds in the villages and towns along his route.

THE "OCCUPYING ARMY" mentality even influenced the regime's handling of economic affairs for many years. "Ours is neither a capitalist nor a socialist economy," a distinguished Spanish economist

told me last year. "It is a predatory economy: the sort of economy you would expect an old-fashioned conquistador to impose. Spoils—in the shape of lucrative posts, monopolies, and permits—for the victors; subjection for the vanquished. An export tax, the equivalent of a discriminatory tariff in foreign markets, was imposed on one important sector for a time because the economic conjuncture favored its products and would therefore have benefited a group of businessmen known to lack enthusiasm for the regime. The minister responsible admits in private that the idea was imposed on him from on high."

The political setup is probably better described as a conquistador regime than by resort to words like fascist and Falangist. Its establishment was simply an act of military conquest, dependent for success on German, Italian, and Portuguese aid and the use of Moroccan conscripts. Ideology was grafted on later. Neither Franco nor even the founder of the Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, was ever a convinced fascist.

José Antonio, son of the General Primo de Rivera who was Spain's dictator in the 20's, was impressed by the hyperbole of Mussolini, Maurras, and the *Action française*, but he saw the Falange as a "poetic movement" rather than as a party with a prosaic political and economic program. (Dionisio Ridruejo, who was the Falange's propaganda chief from 1938 through 1940, estimates that 90 per cent of its members had no clear political ideas in the movement's early years.) Like the founders of many other right-wing extremist groups, in Spain and elsewhere, José Antonio had no scruples against seeking subsidies from the conservative bankers and landowners he professed to despise; but he was too civilized to go the whole fascist hog. His execution by the republicans (inevitable in the circumstances) in November 1936, four months after the military revolt which touched off the civil war, removed the only significant right-wing leader whose sights were set—how-

ever imprecisely—on something higher than the preservation of privilege and the subjugation of the working class.

General Franco has never been anything more complicated than a *franquista*—a supporter of General Franco. Providence served him well in providing him with an ideological cloak in the shape of the leaderless Falange, whose doctrine was so vague that it could be molded and interpreted at will. In every town his troops occupied, communists, anarchists, and opportunists of all kinds flocked to join it, as eagerly as grateful right-wingers, in order to acquire protective coloring. When, in 1943, the defeat of German and Italian fascism came into sight, Franco converted the Falange into his tool. Its membership diminished, and its acting secretary-general, Vivar Téllez, suggested that, as it no longer had any political significance, it might as well be disbanded. But Franco still found it useful: as a potential terrorist arm—"If [opposition elements] try to frustrate our historic destiny," he declared in 1956, "we shall unleash the Falange . . . to engulf them"; as an instrument for controlling the workers and students, through its ancillary *sindicatos* (membership of which is compulsory); and as a constituent of the elaborate complex of checks and balances with which he governs Spain.

THE CAUDILLO's regime has never been a monolith. It is a mobile, the survival of which has depended upon his skill in offsetting one component with another—in balancing Church and Falange, Falange and monarchists, general and general, faction and faction. Within the Falange, a delicate equilibrium has been maintained between Catholic traditionalist and covertly anticlerical *jonsista* ("national syndicalist") tendencies. Within the Church, *Opus Dei* (a wealthy secret lay order) has been cultivated as a counterweight to the Jesuits and other traditional influences,* and Catholic Action Workers' fraternities have been allowed sufficient scope to preoccupy *Opus Dei*. Fiefs and

perquisites have been carefully apportioned among the more influential generals.

Officially, Franco's Spain is a kingdom to which the Bourbon monarchy will be restored when the Caudillo dies or retires. But the Council of the Realm, whose nominal purpose is to help Franco make arrangements for the restoration, has little prestige and less power; and the monarchists are divided. Whereas the ultra-reactionary Carlists, who fought for Franco during the civil war, are allowed to propagate their cause, the statements of the principal Bourbon pretender, Don Juan, who has kept aloof from the present regime, are subject to censorship; and in June, Don Juan's leading liberal supporters were deported to the Canary Islands. In order to confuse monarchist opinion further, and cast doubt on the legitimacy of Don Juan's claim, Franco and his ministers have made gestures from time to time in favor of Don Juan Carlos (Juan's son, whom they consider less intelligent, and therefore more pliable, than his father), Don Jaime (Juan's elder brother, who renounced his claim to the throne in 1945, after contracting a morganatic marriage, but was encouraged to revive his claim last year), and even Don Alfonso (Jaime's son).

Obviously, the moment all doubts about the succession are removed, and detailed arrangements are made for the transfer of power, General Franco will cease to be indispensable. He has every incentive to prolong the uncertainty. He has been assisted until recently by the average Spaniard's fear of the very word "politics," by the war-weariness of the Spanish people (most Spanish families lost one or two members during the civil war, and many lost several), as well as by Spain's moral and po-

* *Opus Dei* and the Jesuits are engaged in a bizarre *lutte d'influence* the details of which read like a page of 17th-century history. A pro-Jesuit priest summed it up recently: "The *Opus* thinks it is clever because it has infiltrated its men into key ministerial and civil-service posts. But the confessors of the most influential generals and ministers are Jesuits, and one . . . is worth ten officials."

litical remoteness from the rest of Europe.

But the influx of millions of tourists—many of them car-owning workers—from France, England, and Germany, and letters and visits from the million or so Spaniards who, for political or economic reasons, have left Spain since 1938, have opened Spanish eyes to the socio-economic revolution that is transforming north-western Europe and awakened a desire to participate in it. And a generation is now of age which has no clear memory of the civil war and is less intimidated than the people over forty by Franco's machinery of repression—partly because some of its leaders are disillusioned *franquistas* or the sons of Franco's own officials and officers who, by virtue of their family connections, have acquired influential social and professional footholds within the establishment. One opposition group with which I was in touch recently included an army captain, a general's son, and the son of a colonel of the Civil Guard. Among the militants of the left-socialist Popular Liberation Front arrested in mid-June were the sons of a nationalist admiral and a Falangist marquis. In Madrid recently an anti-Franco student agitator was tortured in the basement of the building in which his father, a senior police official, has his office.

THE REGIME ONLY narrowly escaped disaster in 1959, under the stress of economic incompetence and corruption; but advisers and loans were rushed in, just in time, by the United States government and the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. The only casualty was what was left of the Falange's vague economic philosophy (compounded chiefly of a hankering for self-sufficiency and a dislike of "Anglosaxon" capitalism). Liberal Spaniards ask ruefully whether the United States and its allies would have acted so swiftly to save a liberal or social-democratic regime, and seem doubtful when one replies: "Of course."* But, at heart, they are grateful for the 1959 rescue

operation, and not only because of the embarrassment it caused the Falange. The technical reforms and stabilization measures which U.S. and OEEC advisers persuaded the Spanish government to accept have already, during the last two years, achieved a considerable liberalization of the economy, sound industrial expansion, and (aided by tourism) a balance-of-payments surplus. Economic liberalization is inevitably generating an impetus toward political liberalization: whereas the introverted autarchism of the first postwar decade fostered middlemen, influence-peddlers, and bureaucrats, Spain's revamped, post-1959 economy is stimulating the more liberal-minded, forward-looking elements of the middle class and facilitating a reassertion of working-class rights and responsibilities.

In the past year, the equilibrium of the regime has been disturbed three times: by General Franco's shooting accident on December 24, by the wave of strikes in April and May, and by the crisis which blew up over the European Movement in June.

When Franco learned that he would have to undergo an operation on his hand he hurriedly named General Muñoz Grandes, Chief of the General Staff, and two other generals to act as his political executors; but he did not have time to brief them adequately, and although all three favored restoring Don Juan, if Franco died, they disagreed over details of timing and procedure and the army's role in the future regime. Their disagreement was by no means perilous or profound, and it raised no problems because Franco recovered quickly; but the dangers inherent in this kind of situation impressed both supporters and opponents of the regime when

* "Formerly, I admired General Franco as a soldier; today I admire him as a statesman"—President Eisenhower, to the Spanish Foreign Minister. "Please assure General Franco of my deep esteem and affection. His regime—in particular, its great stability—has performed immense services to Europe and the Free World"—President de Gaulle, to the Spanish Foreign Minister.

the facts leaked out, and both the Church hierarchy and the Council of the Realm were annoyed that they had not been consulted.

A FLURRY OF maneuvering and claim-staking followed this crisis. The right wing of the army, which wants a "strong" regime to succeed Franco, whoever heads it, improved its position through the appointment of a new Captain-General for the Madrid region (a key internal-security post). The ministers and senior officials in charge of economic affairs, who form what might—with some exaggeration—be called the liberal wing of the administration, pressed for and obtained an earlier announcement than had originally been intended of the government's desire for association with the European Economic Community. The Catholic Church, for over twenty years one of the firmest pillars of the Franco dictatorship, made known its sympathy for Don Juan, and in an official Vatican statement referred to his son Juan Carlos as "Prince of Asturias" (a title reserved for the heir of the reigning Spanish king.) Laying up treasure on the left, also, the Spanish hierarchy authorized two leftward-leaning, and leftist-infiltrated, Catholic movements—the Catholic Action Workers' Fraternities (HOAC) and Catholic Working Class Youth (JOC)—to cooperate with the clandestine socialists and other republicans in agitating for better working conditions and free trade unions.

According to ecclesiastical sources, the hierarchy is alarmed by the growing anticlericalism of the Spanish workers. Catholic indoctrination is compulsory in all schools and universities, and the Church may censor all publications of a religious or philosophical nature; no non-Catholic may become a teacher, a civil servant, an officer, a journalist, or a nurse.* A Spaniard wishing to buy or rent an apartment in a state-subsidized housing development, or seeking municipal employment, or applying for relief or charitable aid (including supplies donated by the U.S. gov-

ernment under the "Food for Peace" program) is generally required to produce a priest's recommendation. Despite these pressures—partly, no doubt, because of them—fewer than 25 per cent of Spanish workers are practicing Catholics. Even convinced Catholics complain of the opulence, worldliness, and "commercialism" of the Church, and priests joke bitterly about the real-estate deals and business methods of the powerful religious orders; but the chief cause of anticlericalism is the Church's close association with the regime—one of the few regimes on earth to have qualified for a papal blessing. Whereas in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, and Saragossa not more than 15 per cent of working-class adults (barely 10 per cent of the men) attend mass, in corresponding parishes in industrial Basque towns, where most priests (but not the bishops) remained loyal to the Republic and are still hostile to Franco, the turnout is nearer 35 per cent.

In authorizing HOAC and JOC to associate themselves with working-class aspirations and cooperate with the left-wing opposition, Cardinal-Primate Pla y Deniel hopes to snap Spain's traditional link between socio-political discontent and anticlericalism. But he wishes also to bring into being a Catholic trade-union movement which may serve as the cornerstone of a Christian democrat party on the French-German-Italian model.[†] Clandestine

* Protestant education and all Protestant publications are banned. Some Protestant groups use books of hymns and psalms printed for them by an underground press in Barcelona. Protestant marriages have no validity, and civil marriages are obtainable only by special ecclesiastical dispensation. Jews, thinner on the ground and therefore considered less likely to corrupt Spanish mores, are regarded more tolerantly, though General Franco has described the Jewish society into which Jesus of Nazareth was born as a "pagan society."

[†] The men who control the Falange and the official unions are, of course, Catholics, as all Falangists must be. But they are not as responsive as Cardinal Pla would like to the social and political guidance of the Church, and they are contemptuous of the parliamentarism and economic liberalism which most Christian democrats favor.

Christian democrat groups exist already in most Spanish cities (their best-known leader is Señor José María Gil Robles, one of the more irresponsible right-wing politicians of the Second Republic, now a chastened liberal monarchist), but they are composed mainly of lawyers, teachers, and clerks. To win a working-class following, the Christian democrats must convince public opinion that they are as critical as the left of the abuses and injustices of the regime, and as determined to struggle for better living and working conditions. The efforts of the Catholic workers' organizations in this direction—in competitive collaboration with the socialists—contributed to the wave of industrial unrest which culminated in the Asturian and Basque strikes last May.

STRIKES ARE illegal in Franco's Spain, and strikers may be charged with "fomenting rebellion." All matters affecting industrial relations are supposed to be settled within the bureaucratic *sindicatos*—the official and only trade unions—to which both workers and employers must pay dues. The system had been under strain since last November when Basque workers at Beasain had demonstrated for higher pay and free trade unions. In May it broke down completely in several of the country's biggest industries. When the government realized that the strike movement was too massive to crush without a resort to military force that would have wrecked Spain's hopes of association with the European Economic Community, it authorized employers and strikers to negotiate directly, bypassing the *sindicatos* if necessary.

Except on the extreme left and extreme right, most Spaniards are now keenly in favor of European integration and Spanish association with—and ultimately membership in—the European Economic Community. Citrus-growers, wine-producers, and the men in charge of the most efficient sectors of the chemical, textile, light engineering, and shipbuilding industries are attracted by the business oppor-

tunities afforded by the Common Market, and apprehensive of the economic consequences of exclusion. (The EEC countries and Britain take over 60 per cent of Spain's exports.) But very many of those who favor Spanish membership in EEC do so for political reasons, confident that a combination of "contagion by example" and discreet pressure from the EEC powers will usher Spain along the path to democracy. When it became known that the Spanish government was considering applying for association, "European" study groups and committees began springing up in every city. The government could not suppress them without discrediting itself in the eyes of EEC, but the Minister of the Interior and the Falange kept a close watch on their activities and speedily reached the conclusion that socialists, liberals, and Christian democrats were using "European" platforms for the propagation of democratic ideas.

In the first week of June the European Movement held an international congress in Munich. Under its auspices delegates from inside Spain—for the most part liberals and Christian democrats—met republican exiles and drafted a joint resolution, which the congress passed unanimously, calling for the restoration of democratic liberties in Spain. A decree was issued in Madrid suspending for two years the theoretical right of Spaniards to live where they please. Spaniards returning from Munich were given the choice between exile and deportation to the Canary Islands. Joaquín Satrustegui and other monarchists of *Unión Española* (a semi-clandestine liberal group which supports Don Juan) chose the Canary Islands; Gil Robles and other Christian democrats, and several non-monarchist liberals, preferred exile. The Spanish press, obeying government directives, denounced them as Communist dupes; the police made more than one hundred arrests, chiefly of suspected socialists who were, of course, labeled "Communists." Striking workers were given far rougher treatment than

they would have received a month earlier.

The backwoodsmen of the regime appeared to be in the ascendant and Foreign Minister Fernando Castiella, a convinced "European," informed Franco anxiously that Spain's chances of acceptance by the European Economic Community were shrinking.

THE JULY cabinet changes were designed both to reassure European opinion and to ease strains within the regime. In making them General Franco showed all his old skill. The appointment of Fraga Iribarne as Minister of Information was a conciliatory gesture in the direction of the "Europeans" and Catholic Action. Other nominations pleased the army, *Opus Dei*, and the economic liberals. The Falange lost two of its favorite ministers but was grateful for the retention of José Solís Ruiz, discredited by the May strikes, as "Minister for the Movement" (in charge of Falangist and *sindicato* affairs): in return Falange and *sindicatos* could be expected to be more pliable than ever. Typically, the nomination of General Muñoz Grandes as vice-president gave satisfaction to Falange and monarchists alike. Muñoz Grandes, a wartime admirer of Hitler, was Secretary-General of the Falange in 1939-40; today he is a sick, aging man who commands no troops, has no political following, and is therefore unable either to go into business on his own account or perpetuate a Franco-type regime after the dictator's death.

But, for all his skill—with the Falange a mere phantom, the *sindicatos* discredited, the Church cautiously disengaging, the bourgeoisie and the wealthy landowners putting their money on the monarchy, and the workers and intellectuals increasingly defiant—General Franco's mobile looks perilously unsteady. Its most stable component is the army.

Although Franco could undoubtedly rule, for a while, with the army alone, it is

far from certain that the army would wish him to. Many of the younger officers are feeling as restless, politically, as other articulate Spaniards of their generation. They dislike serving on the tribunals which try strikers, student demonstrators, and other political offenders. (Four officers who had—unwillingly—tried a group of Barcelona students were reported recently to have been arrested for communicating details of the trial to foreign newspapermen.) Some senior officers are known to be eager to transform the army into a "normal" nonpolitical force "which the nation will esteem rather than fear." The younger officers are for the most part "Europeans" and monarchists, favorable to Don Juan. The most influential senior officers, too, have been won over to Don Juan; and although they are less emphatically "European" than their juniors, they are more responsive to the political guidance of the Church, which is an ardent champion of EEC.

In the army, as in other favored but farsighted sectors of the nation, the European issue is the one likeliest to stimulate a desire for peaceful change. Many officers, like many civilians, fear that their government's sanctions against the liberals and others who attended the Munich congress—and its silly denunciation of the congress as a "Communist-inspired" gathering—may have jeopardized Spain's chances of association with EEC. The Six are expected to discuss Spain's application in the fall (Britain's must first be cleared out of the way). If, ultimately, they reply in effect: "*España sí, Franco no*"—which, despite the July facelift and de Gaulle's desire to facilitate Spain's "integration with Europe," is still highly probable—one should not be surprised to learn some morning that a delegation from the officers' corps, the Church hierarchy, and Don Juan's privy council has informed Franco politely that his mission is at an end.

AMERICAN PRAGMATISM RECONSIDERED

II. William James

IN THE OPENING chapter of his *Pragmatism*, William James characterizes his own version of the gospel of pragmatism as a "mediating" philosophy whose principal aim is to reconcile the two temperamental extremes of "tough-mindedness" and "tender-mindedness," the clash of which he regards as the fundamental theme of the whole contrapuntal history of philosophy. So far as aspirations go the characterization is correct. In fact, the more one reads James, pondering the strange inconsistencies and apparent reversals in his thought, the more one realizes that this aspiration answers to the profoundest need in James's own soul. For in no modern philosopher is the oscillation between the tough- and tender-minded syndromes more pronounced and more unbearable. And in none was there a more urgent demand to overcome the temperamental limitations which God, or nature, had imposed upon him. Carlyle says somewhere that manhood begins when one makes a truce with necessity. If this means, among other things, taking one's own nature or temperament to be something unalterable, James would have regarded any such truce, not as a kind of stoic victory, but as a sign of defeat, an abandonment of the whole enterprise of self-determination and self-transcendence which alone justifies the arduous act of philosophical reflection. "Know thyself!" said the Oracle. But why? Unless one is a masochist,

what is the point of self-knowledge if one can do nothing about the self one seeks to know? Knowledge of the self, for the pragmatist, matters only in so far as it enables one to know what one is up against in one's struggle to become what one ought to be; in a sense, it is simply to know the resources of the enemy. But if the enemy—one's nature or temperament—is unbeatable, or if one really believed there were no chance of beating it, the effort toward self-knowledge would hardly be worth the candle.

However, aspirations are one thing, their fulfillment another. In James's case, despite his best efforts to check it, the permanent temperamental undertow is always in the direction of tough-mindedness, just as in the case of his life-long friend and quotidian ally, Charles Peirce, it was always in the direction of tender-mindedness. And it is this fact which is responsible in my opinion for the different stresses in their respective versions of the pragmatic gospel.

Initially, I realize, such a conception of the differences between Peirce and James seems paradoxical. For Peirce of course is pragmatism's great exponent of the hard-headed gospel of experimental science, for whom indeed philosophy itself is either a science or it is nothing; whereas James is notoriously pragmatism's great exponent of the (from Peirce's point of view) soft-headed doctrine of the will to believe, its sentimental lover of lost souls over whose sacrifice to the general welfare any sensible utilitarian would shed, at most, a single tear, and its perverse defender of outlandish unscientific over-beliefs, the toleration of which hard-headed exponents of scientific pragmatism must regard as an intolerable abuse of the pragmatic ethics of belief.

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NONETHELESS, it is well to remind ourselves that the hardest heads do not always contain the toughest minds. And when we review the list of attitudes James himself associated with tender-mindedness, it can scarcely be denied that they fit Peirce almost to a *t*; for temperamentally Peirce was unquestionably "rationalistic (going by 'principles'), intellectualistic, idealistic, optimistic, religious, free-willist, monistic and dogmatical." Nor can it be doubted that, despite himself, James remained overwhelmingly "empiricist (going by 'facts'), sensationalistic, materialistic, pessimistic, irreligious, fatalistic, pluralistic, and sceptical." Peirce's great problem as a pragmatist was to face facts without excuses and without inventing more and more ingenious theories simply to save appearances; James's problem, on the contrary, was to bring himself to the point of acknowledging that anything but particular facts—principles, for example,—are fully real. For Peirce, whose mind ran to "general runs," the task was always to keep his undoubted speculative genius from running riot; in fact Peirce is the Plato and Hegel of pragmatism rolled into one. For James the task was to convince himself of the point of any speculations that run an inch beyond "the blooming, buzzing confusion" of immediate experience; and he, correspondingly, is pragmatism's Hume, even, at times, its Sextus Empiricus. Peirce's respect for practice and his interest in "practical bearings," as he was at pains to point out in self-defense against critics who mistook him for James, was always theoretical: what he craved to know were not the actual, possibly accidental, effects of holding a certain belief, but rather the hypothetical consequences which would follow if certain standard operations were performed under certain standard conditions. What a belief or an ideal does to or for *me* is no concern of Peirce's pragmatism.

Although James somewhat grudgingly respected the virtues of what he called the "theoretic" sentiment of rationality, they were virtues in his book only to the extent that they serve to simplify and hence to "ease" those processes of action of which our deliberations and calculations are but the preliminary, leading parts. As he wrote in reply to a letter of Peirce's criticizing his book, *The Pluralistic Universe*—" . . .

though I was conceived and born in philosophic sin . . . I expressly *do* believe with you that in the universe of possibles, of merely mental truth, as Locke calls it, relations *are* exact. Time that *equabiliter fluit* is a conceptual entity, against which your time felt as tedious and mine felt as flashing by, can be artificially plotted out and equated, to the great convenience of human practice; and all their exact relations form a splendid artificial scheme of tabulation, on which to catch whatever elements of the existential flux can be made to stick there." (Italics in text.)

Despite such statements it is evident that for James conceptual entities are, at best, conveniences, to be acknowledged as real only for the work they do. His heart, if not his mind, was preoccupied with the "existential flux" itself. Accordingly, what he wanted to know about any idea is not what it would come to if certain ideal conditions prevailed, but what it does come to, here and now, in the raw. And it is precisely for this reason that, unlike Peirce, James draws no very fine line between *the* usage and our uses of words, or between the objective, public, common meanings of expressions and the subjective and private images, feelings, and actions that are associated with them in particular contexts by particular individuals. Unlike Peirce, whose recipes for making our ideas clear were intended as definitive principles of translation for restating the exact scientific meaning of expressions, the informalist James contented himself with improvised suggestions which cannot possibly be taken as formulas for extracting *the* meanings of expressions. In this sense, James was profoundly uninterested, if indeed he believed at all, in meanings. What concerned him was the significance of an utterance for the likes of William James. In a language which merely apes his own, we may say that what James cared for temperamentally was not an intellectual credit on which he could draw when, as, and if the situation required it, but cash in hand for buying the perishable goods that are presently available and immediately required. For William James, in short, it was hard not to believe that every moment is the end of the world.

Of all the attitudes that compose the syndrome of James's tough-mindedness only

that of fatalism seems at first sight quite foreign to him. Yet for all his passionate advocacy of indeterminism and his moral conviction that a man can—since he *ought* to—reform his character by self-determined acts of will, there remains everywhere in his underlying view both of human personality and of the human predicament itself a strongly fatalistic element. Consider for example his anti-intellectualistic view, which reminds one so strangely of the German idealist Fichte, that all philosophies, even the most sober-sided, are at bottom expressions of temperamental affinities and disaffinities. Consider also his almost cynical view, so curious in a pragmatist who stresses the utility of reason, that the whole function of reason in philosophy is that of post-factum rationalization:

I need not discredit philosophy by laborious criticisms of its arguments. It will suffice if I show that as a matter of history it fails to prove its pretensions to be "objectively" convincing. In fact, philosophy does so fail. It does not banish differences; it founds schools and sects just as feeling does. I believe, in fact, that the logical reason of man operates in this field of divinity exactly as it has always operated in love, or in patriotism, or in politics, or in any other of the wider affairs of life, in which our passions, or our mystical intuitions fix our beliefs beforehand. It finds arguments for our convictions, for indeed it has to find them. It amplifies and defines our faith, and signifies it and lends it words and plausibility. It hardly ever engenders it; it cannot now secure it.

But this is not all. The reader will doubtless recall that other distinction between temperaments which he made famous in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, between the "healthy-minded" and the sick-souled." If so he will probably remember that, according to James, the healthy-minded possess "a temperament organically weighted on the side of cheer and fatally forbidden to linger, as those of opposite temperament linger, over the darker aspects of the universe." The description is a giveaway. To be sure, James believed in the possibility of ameliorating the human condition by dedicated work, sacrifice, and the arts of civilization. But his sense of the irremovable absurdity of existence and his almost pathological preoccupation

with the *de facto* diversities embodied in "the existential flux" represent attitudes that radically constrict the area within which his own healthy-minded, self-determining meliorism and voluntarism could operate. "We are all," he said, "*potentially* . . . sick men. The sanest and best of us are of one clay with lunatics and prison inmates. And whenever we feel this, such a sense of the vanity of our voluntary career comes over us, that all our morality appears but as a plaster hiding a sore it can never cure, and all our well-doing as the hollowest substitute for that well-being that our lives ought to be grounded in, but, alas! are not."

James's great biographer, Ralph Barton Perry, hit the nail precisely on the head when he said that James "was not credulous, but *suffered from incredulity*. He was deeply concerned with the need of belief and the right to believe, but made no considerable use of that right." (*Italics in text.*) Incredulity is operative in every nook and cranny of James's thought. It lies at the root of his nominalism and sensationalism. It is responsible for his insistence that our basic knowledge does *not* consist in scientific descriptions of "general runs," but in direct "acquaintance." It is what makes him suspicious of all philosophies which like Spinoza's treat the confusion of actual experience as modes of a rationally cognized unitary substance or which like Hegel's represent it as a series of "moments" in the Absolute's unseen dialectical march through history. It is what makes him skeptical both of the reality of all institutions and the absoluteness of all so-called objective methods and practices. It makes him leery of all ideologies and ideologues. Probably it is also partly responsible for the fact that, for all his protestant nonconformism, there is little trace in the corpus of his writings of the revolutionary social thought—or faith—which has swept the world with ever-increasing fury since the end of the 18th century.

II

WHAT DISTINGUISHES James, however, is not so much his tough-mindedness, which, as he well knew, must lead in its extreme form to the silence beyond nihilism, but the fact that it was never for him the primary philosophical virtue. There are phi-

losophers such as Bertrand Russell for whom disbelief is a great spiritual achievement, the primary evidence of intellectual maturity and freedom of mind. But Russell is perhaps the last of the great Victorian liberals and hence, for all his empiricism, fundamentally tender-minded. Not so William James. To him, skepticism and the attitudes attendant thereto came as easily as boredom, and James, whose temperament was also promethean and moralistic, was suspicious of things that came too easily.

There is, in fact, something distinctly Kantian about James's principled distrust of inclination, of "doing what comes naturally." And it is precisely this Kantian belief that what is right or obligatory always cuts against the grain of inclination which, together with his equally Kantian sense of loyalty to the right as he conceived it, provide the unifying clues to so many otherwise paradoxical aspects of James's thought and character. For example, he became a doctor and a scientist almost in spite of himself. He was repelled by academicians, their institutions, and their works; yet he became a Harvard professor and did his professorial chores punctually and well. An artist by instinct, he was instantly infatuated by Italy; *ergo* he was suspicious both of Italy and his infatuation; either he or Italy or both must be slightly unwholesome. Switzerland on the contrary might be "insipid" but it was wholesomeness incarnate; hence "Switzerland is good! Good people!" More than one critic, including his brother Henry, has remarked upon the strange fact that the cultivated, cosmopolitan, artistic James could be so tendentiously moralistic in his judgments of the arts; at times indeed it is as though James, who really knew how to look at a picture or to read a page, believed in philistinism as a way of life. But the paradox disappears when we realize that he associated the aesthetic, in its pure or classical sense, with the sensuous, and the love of the sensuous, to which he was himself prone, with decadence and frivolity.

The same pervasive moralism underlies his attitudes toward religion. James was naturally prone to irreligion, and for all his brave talk about the will to believe, he could never bring himself to assent to any traditional religious creed. But just because of this he made it his business, almost his life

work, to study religion, especially in its abnormal or pathological forms, to defend it—as some think—well beyond the bounds of reason. Despite all the attendant ills that have accrued to mankind from institutional religion, there remained for James one overwhelmingly important positive fact about religion, namely, its power to give unity and purpose to human life and energy to the moral will. And, of course, it is precisely unity and steadiness of purpose which the ambivalent, restless James so conspicuously lacked and so deeply craved. He thus believed *in* religion *on* moral grounds.

IN FACT WHAT distinguishes James as a philosopher is his tendency to view all questions of belief in essentially ethical terms. And this, I am convinced, is the primary reason why he came to identify truth as a species of good, as the good, or best, within the domain of belief. To love the truth—and for all his anti-rationalism and anti-intellectualism, James did profoundly love the truth—was thus for him simply to commit oneself with all one's mind and heart to whatever ought to be believed. But one cannot sincerely love the truth (that which ought to be believed) if one will make no effort in its behalf. The true skeptic does not love the truth; what he loves, on the contrary, is the spotlessness of his own incredulity. Or, since his basic motivation is fear rather than love, his paralyzing fear is of going wrong. This did not mean for James that one should believe indiscriminately any more than it means that one should act indiscriminately (for the pragmatist, we should bear in mind, all sincere belief is incipient action and reveals itself only in action). It meant only that if one is really afraid that nothing finally is worth believing, one is bound also to question whether the love of truth itself may not be illusory and whether those who seek it are not tender-minded dupes. Such an attitude, when it becomes pervasive, subverts science as well as religion and philosophy. More important, from James's point of view, it undermines the conviction underlying all three that something matters and hence that there is some good in behalf of which an effort is worth taking, however unsure may be its outcome.

James once wrote a piece addressed to the question "What Makes a Life Signifi-

cant?"—a question I may add which most analytical philosophers in our time would probably regard as improper if not meaningless. And his answer, characteristically, was not peace of mind, happiness, or the realization of one's whole nature either as an individual or as a man; rather was it courageous, usually sacrificial action, the acceptance of risk in a great cause, going against the tide of mood or feeling or temperament for the sake of an admittedly uncertain good. But here most of James's commentators seem to me to have missed the point. James's activism, if that is the right term, is not merely an expression of the gambler's mania or the passion of the auto-racer or mountain-climber who takes delight in risking his life against heavy odds. There is that element in James's nature, no doubt. More deeply, however, his activism represents a point of view characteristic neither of the tough-minded nor of the tender-minded but rather of the pragmatic moralist who, regardless of the thrills involved in taking risks, judges that he *ought* to make a choice against the slow death of the tough-minded in behalf of an uncertain but conceivably more abundant life.

This choice, I contend, remained the continuing moral problem of James's life. Perhaps he did not fully understand or appreciate the reflective choice of one who *deliberately* turns to the wall of unbelief. But just because it is a deliberate choice, it is wholly to be distinguished from the temperamental drift toward pessimism, fatalism, skepticism, and irreligion that afflicted James. In this latter sense, tough-mindedness is in fact hardly a philosophy at all, but only a kind of fate or destiny. As such, it does not represent an action or movement of the mind but only one of the myriad ways of letting one's mind go. And since this was his fate, James was obliged to resist it, and hence to move in the direction of tender-mindedness. He had to will, or choose, to believe, but this meant that he had first to assert the right to believe.

It is useful in this connection to compare James with Kierkegaard. In his interesting book, *The Romantic Enlightenment*, Professor Geoffrey Clive tells us how "this lucid empiricist [James] (steeped in Hume) came to embrace an idea akin to the Kierkegaardian 'leap.'" James's lucidity may be ques-

tioned, but there is no doubt of the aptness of the comparison. There is, nonetheless, a radical difference: for Kierkegaard the leap of religious faith involves a suspension of the ethical and hence also a suspension of the terms or conditions which the ethical places upon our beliefs and actions; for James, on the other hand, the primary leap—the assertion of the right to believe—is, in effect, a leap from the plane of inclination and fate to that of morality and freedom. But the freedom of the moralist is no more unconditioned in the domain of belief than in that of action. Once the right to believe is asserted, there immediately arises the corresponding question whether one's exercise of that right is ethical, i.e., whether what one wants to believe is really worthy of belief. In effect, morality gives us a title to believe in advance of experience, but only on the supposition that experience will bear us out. This holds no less in the sphere of religion than in that of science. But it is precisely this which the tender-minded philosophers and divines who claim James as an ally always forget. As for Socrates, so for James, the possession of truth is a rare spiritual achievement, not an assured point of departure. We must hope for knowledge, else the will to believe is senseless and the ethics of belief is a fraud. But to claim that a proposition is true is always to render oneself liable to the chance that a presumed achievement, when further scrutinized, may turn out to be a monstrous failure.

III

FOR THE PRAGMATIC and hence moralistic James, all problems are then, in one way or another, problems of conduct or right action. And this holds also for problems of belief. But James was essentially a philosopher rather than a scientist. Thus he could not, without begging his own philosophical questions, settle his problems of belief by automatic appeal to or application of received methods of verification that are appropriate to the determination of right belief within the limited domain of positive science. Among other things, he was obliged to ask limiting questions about the range of scientific principles of verification. He was obliged also to raise questions about the procedures, if any, for determining what ought

to be believed in spheres which may lie beyond that range, particularly those such as morality, religion, and philosophy itself. But because he was a deep philosopher, he realized that he could not settle these questions until he had a satisfactory conception of the nature of truth itself.

What is truth? Plainly this question was for James the most exigent of all philosophical questions, upon the answer to which turns the whole fate of pragmatism as a mediating philosophy. At first glance, James's own answers seem forthright enough, perhaps too forthright. He does not mince or hedge; he tells us in so many words that "the 'true' is only the expedient in the way of our thinking . . . in the long run and on the whole of course"—as though the qualifying "in the long run and on the whole" could take the curse off that dreadful "expedient"; or again, ". . . ideas . . . become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience"; or, worst of all, "an idea is 'true' so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives." In short, true beliefs are those that work, that aid us in the conduct of our affairs.

Virtually all of James's critics take this to be the substance of his pragmatic answer to the question "What do the adjectives 'true' and 'false' mean?"* If they are correct, and certainly James gives us plenty of encouragement to think that they are so, then it must be said once for all that although the pragmatic theory of truth may be a very original theory, it is also a very great howler. Many arguments have been offered in criticism, most of them irrelevant. For present purposes two will suffice. For example, granted that the fond belief that a recession will not occur during Mr. Kennedy's administration is useful, at least to Mr. Kennedy and his fellow neo-pragmatists, it is nonetheless plain that such a belief may prove false. And if it may prove false then clearly "true" and "useful" must have different meanings. Or again, consider the hypothesis that it is useful in the long run and on the whole to believe that a recession will not occur during Mr. Kennedy's administration. Is this hypothesis true? Suppose it to be true.

* A partial exception is my colleague Morton White, to whose studies of the pragmatists this essay, in particular, owes much.

According to the theory in question, this is merely to say that the hypothesis that it is useful to believe that a recession will not occur during Mr. Kennedy's administration is itself useful. But plainly that is *not* what we wanted to say when we supposed the hypothesis to be true. In short, *as we say*, the truth of a belief, its correspondence to fact, means one thing; the utility of the belief means something else altogether. Were this not so we could never seriously raise the sensible question whether it is true that acceptance of a certain statement really is useful.

NOW THE ODD thing about all this is that James himself seems perfectly aware of this criticism. He admits ungrudgingly and unequivocally that a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to the facts. For him only one nagging question remains: What is it to assert that a proposition corresponds to the facts? Once *this* question is raised we see immediately that if the utility theory of truth is plainly false, the correspondence theory is plainly vacuous. To tell us that a statement is true if and only if it corresponds to the facts is to tell us virtually nothing; it is like telling us that an action is right if its performance is on the whole desirable. The correspondence theory is unexceptionable, but it tells us nothing that we did not already know. What is the "correspondence" relation that holds between a true statement and the facts of which it is true? And what, pray, is a "fact"? At this point, the irresistible impulse is to reply resoundingly that a fact is simply anything a true statement (or belief) is true of, and that a statement corresponds to the facts in question when and only when it is in fact true. In short, the correspondence theory is either obviously circular or else it involves us in the fallacy, or difficulty, which the medievals called *obscurum per obscurius*.

This diversion is, unfortunately, of no immediate help to James. For if the correspondence theory is vacuous or hopelessly obscure, the utility theory, as we have just seen, is plainly absurd. But stay a bit. Consider how closely analogous is our argument against the utility theory of truth to the so-called "open-question" argument against the utility theory of right action. That is to say, just as we can always properly and significantly ask of any action whose effects

are useful, "But, after all, is it really right?" so we can always significantly ask of any proposition which we find it convenient to believe, "But, after all, is it really true?" Consider also that the very point of this analogy seems to be established in advance, when we recall James's claim that truth itself is a species of good, that species, namely, which has to do with matters of belief. Finally, we may observe that *Pragmatism*, whose subtitle is "A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking," is itself dedicated "to the memory of John Stuart Mill from whom I first learned the pragmatic openness of mind and whom my fancy likes to picture as our leader were he alive today."

NOW IN HIS *Logic*, Mill explicitly states that the principle of utility is only a rule of conduct which tells us, not what "right action" means, but rather by what standards or on what grounds, in his judgment, we should judge actions to be right. Is it not plausible that James, who dedicated *Pragmatism* to Mill, had read his master, and that he understood as well as Mill that the principle of utility, far from being intended as an explication of the meaning of the phrase "right action" was intended only as a definition of the principle or standard by which right actions are to be judged? If so, then I think we are entitled to suppose that when James proposes that beliefs should be judged as true or false in terms of their consequences he, like Mill, intends only to propose a general standard for the verification of beliefs, not an explication of what "true" means. On the contrary, if I am right, James's real theory of the meaning of "true" and of "false" is to be found precisely in the contention that "true" is a species of "good," that a true belief is one which it is right to believe, and that the truth is nothing but what we ought to believe.

In other words, "true" and "false," like "good" and "right," are normative terms, and statements containing them are, accordingly, normative or prescriptive. This thesis I shall henceforth call the pragmatic theory concerning the meaning or use of the concept of truth in order to distinguish it from James's own utilitarian or consequentialist approach to the problem of standards or methods of verification, which I shall discuss shortly. To my mind, the pragmatic

theory of the meaning of "truth," so far from being a howler, is a deep source of philosophical understanding, including in particular an understanding of philosophy's own role in our cultural life. It explains, as "realist" interpretations of the correspondence theory do not, how questions about the truth of propositions necessarily give rise in practice to questions about the rightness or justifiability of our belief in them. In a word, it explains, with admirable succinctness and clarity, why truth matters ethically and why the concern for truth is not just a matter of taste, like the passion for artichokes or well-trimmed lawns. It also helps us to see for the first time why the correspondence theory has proved at once so misleading and frustrating. The correspondence theory, as traditionally understood, disposes us to think of truth as a "real quality," analogous to yellow, or as a "real relation," like spatial contiguity, whose presence we will discern if only we look sharply and in just the right place. But where, pray, is that? Somewhere, no doubt, "between" the proposition and its "object." But this, as it turns out, covers a vast amount of territory in which philosophers as acute as Bertrand Russell have wandered despairingly. Proponents of the correspondence theory have never been able to agree among themselves as to the location of truth. Nor, if James is right, are they ever likely to, since the term "true," which is normally used only in prescribing what we ought to believe, is not the name, or sign, of any quality or relation at all. For this very reason, however, the correspondence theory, like the Cartesian doctrine of clear and distinct ideas, has been a primary breeder of that factitious skepticism against which Charles Peirce inveighed.

Still more important is the light which the pragmatic theory sheds upon the nature and significance of philosophical disputes about tests of truth or methods of verification, including James's own test of utility. Problems of truth, according to the pragmatic theory, are at bottom problems of conduct, problems, in this instance, about what is to be believed and on what grounds. If so, then philosophical disputes about methods of verification must be understood at bottom as normative disputes about the controlling principles by which individuals or groups are to conduct themselves in settling ques-

tions of belief. Consider, for example, the positivistic thesis that there are two and only two basic forms of truth: logical or "analytic" truths, which are determinable exclusively by an appeal to "rules" of logic and of language; and empirical or "synthetic" truths whose verification requires, in addition, the test of observation. What is the status of this thesis? It is not certainly an hypothesis which can be tested, directly or indirectly, by observation; it is not, in short, a scientific theory like the law of gravitation. Nor is it one of the "analytic" truths of logic and language. It is, in short, a normative principle whose whole importance is owing to the fact that it implies that there can be no sensible questions about what ought to be believed where purely logical and scientific methods of verification are inapplicable. In effect, positivism leaves us without a basis for distinguishing between right and wrong beliefs anywhere outside of logic, mathematics, and positive science, and in so doing leaves us, when we move beyond these disciplines, completely at the mercy of our inclinations or temperaments.

From a pragmatic point of view, it is not hard to understand why positivism should be anathema to the Catholic Church. For positivism not merely denies the authority of the church as an arbiter of truth in the spheres of faith and morals; it denies that any questions of truth can even arise in these domains and hence that expressions of religious or moral "belief" have any cognitive meaning whatever. By the same token, however, it is also understandable why non-Catholics, including also most non-positivists, cannot, in conscience, remain silent "for the sake of peace" in the face of the Church's pretensions as the ultimate arbiter of truth in matters of faith and morals. For to do so is, in practice, not just to extend to individual Catholics an equal right to believe in these spheres, but also in effect to condone the right of any institution to claim absolute, indefeasible authority over any range of human thought and action.

IV

AS A FOLLOWER of John Stuart Mill, James is as much opposed to the dogmatism of positivism in the domain of "theoretic" truth as he is to the dogmatism

of Catholicism in the more obviously practical domains of religious and moral truth. Both are equally inconsistent with that openness toward experience which, for James, is perhaps the cardinal spiritual virtue. And like all hard-headed forms of tender-mindedness, both are unable to do justice to the irreducible diversities of intellectual aspiration and moral concern. As Mill regarded the principle of utility as a charter of liberality in the judgment of actions, so James regarded its analogue as a charter of liberality in the judgment of beliefs. But in neither form is liberality—which Aristotle significantly called "greatness of mind"—to be construed as a covering rule for the justification of those who confuse liberty with license in any sphere of conduct. On the contrary, the gospel of utility, for those who follow it conscientiously, is a hard taskmaster indeed. It requires that we consider all the tougher facts which tender-minded dogmatists, whether in the domain of science or in that of religion, prefer not to acknowledge. Above all, it demands that we not settle into the familiar grooves of our dogmatic methods of verification in any sphere of inquiry until we have examined carefully all the relevant consequences of doing so.

Of course the operative term in the preceding sentence is "relevant." Granted that we are to consider consequences in deciding what we ought to believe, the question remains, "what consequences, and for whom?" Sometimes James exposed himself to the charge that in every domain of inquiry all consequences are of equal relevance, which is manifestly absurd. In judging what we ought to believe in the domain of experimental science, it is irrelevant to consider the bearings of our beliefs upon our creature comforts or upon the prosperity of our political alliances. Sometimes also, in an anarchical mood, James was disposed to the view that each individual is free to judge the truth of any belief in terms of consequences that are satisfactory to himself alone. "What," said Peirce, in a letter of rebuke, "is utility, if it is confined to a single person? Truth is public." Now I think that James always remained, *in some sense*, an individualist who was prepared to think that there are some truths, especially truths about matters of ultimate religious and moral concern, which cannot be adequately assessed

by public methods of verification. I think also that he believed that each person is finally beholden only to his own conscience in his philosophical judgment about the methods of verification binding upon him in any sphere of activity. Yet I am also convinced, after trying to piece together James's various and often inconsistent remarks, that he did not seriously mean to suggest that the principle of utility can be directly applied as a test of truth to such statements as "Boston is the largest town in New England" or "Two plus two equals four." On the contrary, the principle of utility is nothing more than a general principle of orientation which bids us, within any domain of inquiry, to consider all of the relevant practical bearings of our ideas. What is relevant, however, the principle of utility itself cannot decide. That will depend entirely upon the kind of belief that we are considering.

NOR, AS I read him, did James intend to discount the fact that although each individual is finally responsible, intellectually and morally, only to himself, he is also, in practice, a social being, invested with commitments to impersonal codes of conduct which he cannot conscientiously reject. As a logician, and every man whether he likes it or not is one, each individual is beholden to the "theoretic" demand to be consistent in his thinking in any sphere. No doubt the laws of logic have their roots only in "the sentiment of rationality." Yet this sentiment, which imposes upon us all a stern principle of coherence and simplicity in deciding in any domain what is worthy to be believed, is not peculiar to mathematical logicians or rationalistic philosophers. In some measure it provides the consequential test of logical truth for every man. Similarly, all men are subject in practice to the correlative principle which demands that we acknowledge the irreducible diversities, discontinuities, and pluralities which our experience finally discloses. This is the principle which requires that we reject the Parmenidean philosophy which holds that everything, finally, is the same or a mode of the same. The consequential test of predictability in empirical science is an acknowledgement of this principle within the domain of perception. For if everything were the same, prediction would be pointless

and observation an act of supererogation. But, as James perceived, there are also other applications of the principle in morals, in metaphysics, and in religion.

Questions of relevance, and hence questions of relevant consequences, depend ultimately upon our intentions in making any assertion. Where our intentions are concerned with matters of logic, our test of truth should be simplicity and consistency. Where they are concerned with the prediction of phenomena, our test should be consequent perception. But what if our intention, however blurred or confused by rationalistic philosophers and theologians, is not primarily concerned with questions of simplicity or predictability? What, in short, if our concern is with the beautiful or with the divine? Here, to be sure, the tests of simplicity and predictability should prevail to the extent that we cannot decide what is beautiful or divine without knowing what is "theoretically" true. But if, as James believes, divinity and beauty are something more than the simple and the predictable, something more also will be required to test the truth of aesthetic and religious beliefs.

Despite the positivists we have no more right to believe what we will—in fact we have far *less* right—in the religious domain than we have to believe what we will in the domains of logic or positive science. For the tough-minded James, religion imposes a far *heavier* burden of verification than these other more limited forms of inquiry. For science and logic have to answer only to our demands for simplicity, consistency, and predictability. Religious faith must answer to and for our total sense of existence, including our awareness of incoherence, of diversity, of change, of frustration and loss, in short, to our whole sense of the absurd and the evil in our lives. One "lost soul," one lost fact, one final incoherence *anywhere* can be the death of God.

It is quite literally true, as James contended, that "faith creates its own verification." It is quite literally true, as he says; "Believe and you shall be right, for you shall save yourself." William James tenderly believed in the belief in God. He could not, in conscience, believe in God. That was his tragedy. Perhaps it was also his fate. But if James could not believe in God, how then can you or I?

Yom Kippur in Nineveh

MILTON HIMMELFARB

READING THE Torah is the heart of the synagogue service. That, even more than prayer, was what the synagogue was invented for, probably during the Babylonian Exile 2,500 years ago. Reading and expounding the Torah are so much the central purpose of the synagogue that the "dim religious light" of stained-glass windows is not for us. "Let there be light" is more like it.

What part of the Pentateuch shall be read on an ordinary Sabbath is determined by its place in the annual cycle—which over the centuries slowly replaced a triennial cycle—from Genesis 1: 1 to Deuteronomy 34: 12. For holy days, whether falling on a Sabbath or not, it was the Rabbis (and their predecessors) who determined what the Pentateuchal lection should be, the principle then being relevance rather than sequence. When the *haftarah*, the Prophetical lection following the Pentateuchal one, was instituted, it was apparently for the reader to choose. (Luke has Jesus given the book of Isaiah to read from on a Sabbath, but in the book Jesus reads what he wishes.) Gradually the Rabbis fixed the *haftarot* for certain days, and finally for all. For Yom Kippur, the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar, the Rabbis must have fixed the Prophetical readings early.

Everything about the Yom Kippur Scriptures is unusual or unique. On Yom Kippur there is a full reading in the afternoon as well as the morning. On Yom Kippur a *haftarah* consists of an entire book, Jonah—followed by three verses from Micah. (The five *Megillot*, which severally are read on the Pilgrimage Festivals, the 9th of Av, and Purim, are not *haftarot* or even Prophetical, but Writings; and though Obadiah, only 21

verses long altogether, is read by Sephardim on a Sabbath shortly before Hanukkah, Ashkenazim are then reading from Hosea.) On Yom Kippur the afternoon *haftarah* is longer than the Pentateuchal lection. And on Yom Kippur the *haftarot* appear to contradict the Pentateuchal lections they follow, instead of paralleling them. The Yom Kippur readings call attention to themselves in an especially emphatic way.

The morning Pentateuchal lection, priestly and ritualistic, consists of Leviticus 16 and Numbers 29: 7–11, which the Mishnah Yoma tells us the High Priest used to read or recite in the Second Temple on Yom Kippur. All of Yoma, until nearly the end, is in the same spirit, full of slaughterings and countings and sprinklings—one, one and one, one and two, one and three . . . one and seven; from above downward, except when from below upward; from northeast to northwest to southwest to southeast. But the Rabbis, who codified those laws and who ordained that those numbing passages from the Pentateuch should be read in our synagogues, also selected Isaiah 57:14–58: 14 for the Prophetical accompaniment:

. . . For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and lofty place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit. . . . Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your home; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? . . . Then you shall call, and the LORD will

answer; you shall cry, and He will say, Here I am.

I have said that Isaiah appears to contradict the Pentateuch's priestly ritualism, but that is a modern's bias. The Rabbis saw no contradiction, only completion. In the last paragraph of Yoma they have the same kind of contradiction-completion to their own ritualism:

If a man says, "I shall sin and repent, and sin again and repent again," he will be given no chance to repent. If he says, "I will sin and the Day of Atonement will effect atonement," then the Day of Atonement effects no atonement. For transgressions that are between man and God the Day of Atonement effects atonement, but for transgressions that are between a man and his fellow the Day of Atonement effects atonement only if he has satisfied his fellow.*

The Rabbis were serious about every last detail of the ritual, but they were as explicit as they could be that all that was nothing without the right inward disposition and the right conduct. So they made the reading about loosing the bonds of wickedness follow the reading about bullocks, goats, and incense; and in our Rabbinical prayer service we say: "Repentance, prayer, and works of justice and mercy [*tsedakah*] can avert the harsh judgment."

THE AFTERNOON READINGS are more enigmatic: Pentateuch—Leviticus 18; Prophets—Jonah, followed by Micah 7: 18–20. In the morning the Pentateuchal lection stated the ritual laws and the Prophetic lection the spiritual or moral laws. But Leviticus 18 is about chastity and unchastity, and why single that out for Yom Kippur? And what has Jonah to do either with that or with the day?

Leviticus 18 is a unit of three parts. Exordium (five verses):

. . . You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. . . . You shall . . . keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live: I am the LORD.

* From the Danby translation, modified slightly.

Body (eighteen verses): Incest is defined by enumeration and prohibited, including marriage with living sisters, and prohibitions then follow against lying with a menstruous woman, adultery, child sacrifice, sodomy, and bestiality. Peroration (seven verses):

Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves; and the land became defiled, so that I punished its iniquity and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and do none of these abominations . . . lest the land vomit you out, when you defile it. . . . So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practiced before you, and never to defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God.

The Rabbis did not pick this chapter to remind us that it is wholesome family life which has sustained the Jews, as the embarrassed editor-translator of one widely used *Mahazor* writes. (He summarizes, delicately, instead of translating.) Leviticus 18 is there for more compelling reasons.

Whether or not those scholars are right who think that Rosh Ha-shanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot (which begins five days after Yom Kippur) were originally one holiday, the month of Tishri, in which they fall, was the time of harvest and autumnal equinox. In the ancient world, and even in much more modern times, to celebrate the New Year of harvest and equinox with due rites would amount to what the Rabbis euphemistically called *qallut rosh*, levity. In a well-known passage in the Talmudic tractate Sukkah an old source says that the authorities had to try three ways of separating the sexes in the Temple before they were able to prevent *qallut rosh*, and in an equally well-known passage in the Mishnah Ta'anit we are told that on Yom Kippur itself the daughters of Jerusalem used to dance a courtship dance before the young men. While that is said approvingly—they are nice Jewish girls, exhorting the young men to consider family, not beauty—at an earlier time the character of the season's jollity had disgusted the prophets. On Sukkot, in the Second Temple, there were water libations and torchlight processions, which are unmistakable fertility rites. (On one

famous occasion, a Sadducee priest-king's contempt for the libation provoked a riot, which he suppressed with great cruelty. The Pharisees favored the rite, not for its intrinsic merit but because they upheld the Unwritten Law—i.e., tradition—in principle.) Tishri was a time for being wary of fertility celebrations.

THEOLOGICALLY, Leviticus 18 is about paganism. It insists that pagans—Egyptians, Canaanites—are unchaste and depraved because their religion commands them to be, not because it fails to restrain them: to “do these abominations” and “practice these abominable customs” are “their statutes.” For the Bible, and the Rabbis, unchastity and depravity are the piety of paganism.

Were the Bible and the Rabbis unfair? We know that brother-sister marriage was an honored tradition of Egyptian royalty. We know that male cult-prostitutes—*qedeshim*, related to *qadosh*, “holy”!; “sodomites” in the King James and Jewish Publication Society versions—were an honored class of the Canaanite temple personnel. They are forbidden in Deuteronomy, where they are also called dogs and an abomination to the Lord, but in II Kings we learn that when King Josiah of Judah reformed the Temple, “he broke down the houses of the *qedeshim* which were in the House of the LORD.” The scholars quote Lucian of Samosata as reporting that in the 2nd century of our era the services of *qedeshim* were still a “very sacred custom” for the pious pagans of Hierapolis, in Syria.

In Numbers, the Israelites “began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.” Here, as commonly in the Bible, *zanah*, “to play the harlot,” is both literal and figurative. The standard metaphor for infidelity to God is marital infidelity.

But the decisive proof that Leviticus 18 is concerned with paganism rather than with sexuality as such is its prohibition of child sacrifice, in the center of the five prohibitions after the long, multiple prohibition of incest, and the only one of them ending with “I am the LORD.” It was not by fun and games alone that pagans celebrated or invoked fertility. Robert Graves has made us aware of

this for ancient Greece, and essentially the same paganism, i.e., fertility religion, prevailed throughout the Mediterranean. The Carthaginians, who still called themselves Canaanites in St. Augustine's time, sacrificed human beings well into the Rabbinic and Christian period, centuries after their conquest by Rome. Kings and founders of cities, of course, were under a special obligation to assure the fertility of their people, the fertility of livestock and crops, and the general well-being. In II Kings, when Mesha, king of Moab, saw that his battle with the Israelites was going against him, “he took his eldest son who was to reign in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall.” Kings Ahaz and Manasseh of Judah—both, especially Manasseh, under pagan influence—burned their sons as offerings. The prophets repeatedly accuse commoners, too, of sacrificing their children.

That seems to have been true also of the popular, loyal, unpagan Israelite religion, when it was yet unaffected by prophets or reformers and as it was practiced before the Babylonian Exile. Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to keep a vow to the Lord, as the pagan Agamemnon was prepared to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to Artemis at Aulis. When Hiel rebuilt Jericho, “he laid its foundations at the cost of . . . his first-born, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son.” Above all, there is that dark saying in Ezekiel: “Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life; and I defiled them through their very gifts in making them offer by fire all their first-born . . .” (Micah 6:7 suggests the same).

The most probable time for the choice of Leviticus 18 as a Yom Kippur reading was the period of or soon after Ezra-Nehemiah, the latter part of the 5th century B.C.E. Fertility religion was then not merely a vestige or a memory, as it was to be in Rabbinic times. It was an ever-present danger, the faith and practice of those who had not gone into exile—the Old Believers, as we might call them—and of the local women whom the returning Judeans first married and then were forced to banish as seductresses. This Yom Kippur reading, further, is linked to the Rosh Ha-shanah Pentateuchal reading(s), which must have been fixed at the same time—the account in Genesis of

the Binding of Isaac and God's command to our father Abraham not to sacrifice his son, but a ram. It did not trouble the (post-) Ezranic religious authorities that by the standards of Leviticus 18, to which they themselves gave such prominence, Jacob was guilty of incest in marrying two living sisters, Leah and Rachel. Their indifference is further proof that the unchastity or depravity they were condemning was not, or not only, the ordinary kind, but pagan "statutes." Obviously, no one could think of Jacob as a pagan.

THIS DOES NOT explain Jonah as the afternoon *haftarah*. To be sure, there is a lexical tie between Leviticus 18 and Jonah, in that they have the verb *qy'*, "to vomit" or "to spew," four of the six times it occurs in the Pentateuch and Prophets (nine in the entire Bible). Sometimes that sort of thing seems to be the only reason why a *haftarah* was chosen—e.g., Hosea 2: 1–22 for Numbers 1: 1–4: 20, which do not have much more in common than the noun *mispar*, "number," and the verb *paqad*, "to count" in Numbers and "to punish" in Hosea—but Yom Kippur would require a better link. If the intention was to choose a Prophetic lection that would strengthen the Pentateuchal denunciation of unchastity-depravity-paganism, other Prophetic passages are more appropriate than Jonah—passages from Hosea or Jeremiah, for instance.

It does not matter whether, as most scholars believe, Jonah is late, dating from the 5th or 4th century B.C.E., or, as Ezekiel Kaufmann argues, considerably earlier. It does not matter that its Nineveh is an abstraction and not the real capital of Assyria that was destroyed late in the 7th century B.C.E. For the Rabbis it was the book of Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet of the Lord mentioned in II Kings. Jonah is not about the great fish. It is about God's eagerness for the repentance of men and women, so that He may forgive them—not Jews alone, but pagans also, and not ordinary pagans, but Assyrians, "the rod of My anger," the militaristic scourge of the ancient world who destroyed the Northern Kingdom, exiled the ten tribes, besieged Jerusalem, and devastated Judah. God wants Jonah to summon Nineveh to repent and live, Jonah flees because he does not want Nineveh to live,

and God, plucking Jonah from his ship, makes him go and preach. The Ninevites fast, repent, and are saved. Jonah, then, is about fasting, repentance, and salvation; and so is Yom Kippur.

WHOEVER the author of Jonah was, and whenever he lived, he must have wanted his readers to think of Abraham too, and especially of Moses and the exodus from Egypt. Jonah identifies himself to the sailors in a puzzling and striking way: "I am a Hebrew." The only other personages the Bible calls Hebrews are Abraham, Joseph, and Moses: it was to Abraham that child sacrifice was first forbidden, and Joseph is linked to Moses in that the first leads the Israelites into Egypt and the second leads them out. Next, just before the exodus the last of the ten plagues strikes the Egyptians in the death of their first-born, "from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle." The only other place in the Bible with that peculiar threefold composition of society—king, commoners, and cattle—is Jonah; but in Jonah the three classes fast, repent, and pray, and are saved.

Passover, the exodus festival, is in Nisan, and Rosh Ha-shanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot are in Tishri. Tishri, as we have seen, is the time of a harvest and the autumnal equinox; and Nisan is the time of another harvest, of lambing, and of the vernal equinox. A Passover Pentateuchal lection tells of the death of the Egyptian first-born, to which the Yom Kippur *haftarah* of Jonah seems to refer, negatively, by stressing that God spared the Assyrians; and a Passover *haftarah* tells how King Josiah purged the Temple of its *qedeshim*, which seems to refer to the Pentateuch read on Yom Kippur afternoon. Further, Yom Kippur is about salvation and redemption, and the great historical event and paradigm of redemption is the exodus from Egypt, which Passover celebrates.

There is still another reason why the Pharisees, or their predecessors, were conscious of Passover when they decided the Scripture to be read on Yom Kippur. Egypt was an urgent political reality for them. After Alexander the Great died, his general Ptolemy became king of Egypt and his gen-

eral Seleucus king of Syria and, for a time, Mesopotamia. Judaea, contested and fought over by the two dynasties, in the 3rd century B.C.E. was under the Ptolemies and in the first third of the 2nd century under the Seleucids, each uneasy about the Jews' allegiance. A famous article by Louis Finkelstein in the *Harvard Theological Review* recalled those imperial rivalries to date the curious passage in the Passover Haggadah which says that Laban the Aramean, Jacob's uncle and the father of his two wives, was worse than Pharaoh. Since Laban has nothing to do with Egypt and the exodus, what is he doing in the Haggadah? And why is it insisted that he was worse than Pharaoh? For the Ptolemies, Passover must have seemed anti-Egyptian. Laban is "the Aramean," i.e., Syrian, and proclaiming the wickedness of the archetypal Syrian was an attempt to reassure the Ptolemies about the Jews. Hence that part of the Haggadah must be from the 3rd century B.C.E. On the other hand, Dr. Finkelstein writes in a later article in the same journal, the Haggadah's quotation of Joshua's epitome of God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, which emphasizes the patriarchs' Mesopotamian origins, must be a pro-Seleucid gesture, and is to be dated in the first third of the 2nd century B.C.E.

In Hellenistic times, as for Herodotus earlier, "Assyria" was thought to be a variant of "Syria," and to the Seleucids Jonah on Yom Kippur must have been as reassuring as Joshua on Passover. The Yom Kippur afternoon Pentateuch has the Egyptians as an example of abominable vice, while the *haftarah* shows that the God of the Jews loves the (As)syrians. Jonah as a Yom Kippur *haftarah*, therefore, may also date from the first third of the 2nd century B.C.E.

THE RABBIS—to use an anachronistic term for convenience—had to reckon with suspicious foreign rulers, but they must have longed for that verse in Isaiah to become a present reality: "Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My heritage." It was they who chose Jonah as a Yom Kippur *haftarah*, and ideologically Jonah is universalist rather than particularist.

Jonah ends with God saying: "And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city,

in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" In the *haftarah* the Rabbis append to this the final three verses of Micah, of which the last is: "Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, / as Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old." If it is possible for Assyrians to be forgiven—pagans par excellence, and therefore practitioners par excellence of all the abominations forbidden in Leviticus—how much more possible it must be for Jews!

(The Rabbis regard themselves as being in the line of descent from Ezra and Nehemiah, the ultra-particularists who invoked Deuteronomy's injunction that "no Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD, even to the tenth generation" to make the Judaeans banish their foreign wives; but it was the Rabbis who selected Ruth for reading in the synagogue on Shavu'ot, and many scholars consider Ruth, together with Jonah and parts of Isaiah, to be a polemic against the narrowness of Ezra-Nehemiah. "Ruth the Moabite" she is called, five times; and we are told that she is to be the great-grandmother of David, the king whose scion will be the Messiah. The book ends with "David.")

Finally, for the Rabbis "much cattle" must have reinforced "persons who do not know their right hand from their left." It would be too much to say that the Rabbis had a doctrine of sin that derived sin from ignorance or folly alone; but on Yom Kippur they were satisfied to plead ignorance, before the Tribunal on high, in extenuation of the people's sins. The last verse of Jonah echoes the verse from Numbers that is constantly repeated in the Yom Kippur service: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, because the whole people did erroneously" (my translation).

Is all this what the Rabbis really meant, or only what we would like them to have meant? The Mishnah being the Rabbis' own codification of the law, let the Mishnah decide. We have seen that toward the end of Yoma the Rabbis teach that Yom Kippur is nothing without true repentance and that while God will forgive us for our intentions, it is by deeds that we must win the for-

givenness of our fellows. And then, at the very end, we read (I am modifying Danby's translation) :

R. Akiba said, Happy are you, O Israel! Before whom are you made clean, and who cleanses you? Your Father who is in heaven; as it is said [Ezekiel 36: 25], "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean." And it further says [Jeremiah 17: 13], "O LORD, the hope [mikveh] of Israel." As the mikveh [immersion pool for lustration] cleanses the unclean, so does the Holy One, blessed be He, cleanse Israel.

It has been argued that this is a later addition, missing from an early manuscript and inserted for the traditional purpose of ending a text with *divere nehamah*, words of consolation, in the same way that Amos, for instance, is made to end in words of consolation and the *Wisdom of the Fathers* in the verse from Exodus: "The LORD shall reign for ever and ever"; or for the purpose of ending with *aggadah*, the easier, nonlegal dicta, rather than *halakhah*, the difficult legal matter. But George Foot Moore considered this text to be authentic, and he was guided by Louis Ginzberg. In any event, R. Akiba's saying is completely faithful to

the Rabbinical spirit, down to the ritualization of the hope-mikveh and the spiritualization of the bath-mikveh. That is yet another contradiction-completion, like making Jonah follow Leviticus 18.

It is also like the relation between the 'Avodah and the 'Al het in our Yom Kippur service. The 'Avodah—work, service, cultus—is a kind of long, versified paraphrase of Yoma, recalling the Temple and the sacrifices in detail. To pious Jews through the centuries, its recitation this day in the synagogue, on the principle of "so will we render for bullocks the offerings of our lips" (Hosea, JPS version), was an exalting thing, hard as that may be for us to believe. But over and over we also say the 'Al het, the long, inclusive *nostra culpa*. The 'Al het does not mention one ritual transgression. ("Eating and drinking" probably refers to intemperance rather than violations of *kashrut*.) The offense that recurs in it most often, under many synonyms, is *leshon ha-ra'*, an "evil tongue."

After two thousand years of liturgical expansion, the basic structure and intent of our Yom Kippur service remain what they were in the time of the Rabbis. The last word is still Akiba's.

Sacco-Vanzetti Continued

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your January 1962 issue carried an article by James Grossman entitled "The Sacco-Vanzetti Case Reconsidered." It is incomprehensible to me how a person of Mr. Grossman's standing could ever over his signature express so much that is illogical, unrealistic, and unfair in his conclusion that Sacco was guilty but that Vanzetti was innocent.

The trial of Sacco and Vanzetti in Dedham, Massachusetts was a travesty of justice. It was established that the district attorney introduced perjured evidence against the defendants, that the foreman of the jury (before he heard a word of testimony) said of the defendants: "Damn them, they ought to hang anyway!" and that the trial judge, who was venomously prejudiced against the defendants, declared to friends that he would "get those guys [the defendants] hanged!"

The Judiciary Committee of the Massachusetts legislature officially stated: "We are not unmindful of all that has happened in the Sacco-Vanzetti case. We neither *condone* nor criticize the action taken by the courts."

Grossman admits the trial was unfair but says that he separates "the question of guilt from that of the fairness of the legal proceedings." But how can a verdict be correct if the trial is a monstrous miscarriage of justice? What Grossman says in effect is that although the tree (the trial) is rotten and diseased to the core, the fruit can still be good.

Grossman approaches the problems involved in so serious and solemn an undertaking as a murder case with overly simple equations. He says that—

"Either Sacco is one of the murderers or else the ballistic evidence against him has been deliberately faked to make him seem guilty of murder."

I am willing to believe on the record in this case that "fakery" played an ominous part in the prosecution's ballistic evidence; but one does not have to choose between the two black-and-white alternatives which

Grossman advances. He overlooks a third alternative, namely, that there could have been an honest error committed in the mechanical appraisal of the bullets and weapon tested. Grossman assumes that ballistic evidence is infallible. We know that in the majority of criminal trials where shooting is an issue there are ballistic experts testifying on either side. One or more of them must eventually be proved wrong, even though conscious lying may not be present.

Grossman admits that the identification evidence at the trial "was far from convincing." If it was "far from convincing," wouldn't that conclusion in itself raise the reasonable doubt which, under our law, entitled the defendant to an acquittal? The fact, however, is that Grossman really understates the matter when he says that the identifying evidence was far from convincing. It was, in point of stark realism, utterly worthless. Not one of the Commonwealth witnesses told a story on the witness stand which he had not earlier contradicted or later repudiated in some way.

... How does Grossman reach his conclusion of Sacco's guilt? He says that a certain firearms expert, Calvin H. Goddard, in 1920 conducted a test with Sacco's pistol and stated that it was Sacco's pistol which fired the fatal bullet which killed Berardelli at South Braintree on April 15, 1920. This test was not an official test, it was not conducted by Court sanction nor was it officially supervised. Neither was the report of the test submitted in court. Goddard's test was strictly private and conducted for the purpose of advertising himself. Moreover, the test was made with dirty bullets.

Sacco's pistol was not an unusual firearm. There were 200,000 pistols of the same caliber and make in existence at the time of the murder. It was not proved that it could not have been one of the other 199,999 pistols which fired the fatal shot.

Goddard was shown to be unreliable in a case which followed the Sacco-Vanzetti case. A man in Cleveland, a certain Milazzo, was accused of having shot a certain Yorkell. Goddard compared the fatal bullet with test bullets fired through Milazzo's pistol and said they were identical. This evidence, if

believed, could have sent Milazzo to the electric chair for murder. It was proved later, however, that Milazzo did not purchase his pistol (the one Goddard said had fired the fatal bullet) until *after* the murder of Yorkell!

Mr. Grossman is unfair. In the most fantastic argument I have ever seen presented by a lawyer he says that anarchists in France in the 1880's—before Sacco was born—committed robberies and murders, and from this alleged historical fact he concludes that Sacco was capable of killing Berardelli in 1927. Even a first-year law student knows that such a comparison is not only offensively irrelevant but idiotically impertinent.

Grossman makes another statement which would make even a high school student blush with shame. He says: "There is the likelihood—or at least we prefer to believe that there should be—that if a man is arrested he is guilty." Our criminal law is based on the very foundation that not the slightest suggestion of criminality may attach to the fact that a person is arrested. Under our American system an accused person is presumed innocent until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by the unanimous vote of his peers, the jurors. Has Mr. Grossman forgotten his school training?

The fact of the matter is that Grossman does not know the Sacco-Vanzetti case and unwittingly he admits this, for he says:

"Any attempt at reconciling all of the evidence in the Sacco-Vanzetti case is bound to be labored; whatever conclusion we adopt, all the facts will never lie comfortably side by side no matter how much we try to make them fit each other."

Yet, if he were a juror, voting on whether Sacco was guilty of Berardelli's murder, he would, in spite of this confusion, vote "guilty" and Sacco would be electrocuted, if the electric chair had not already claimed that innocent man.

Perhaps the most ludicrous of Grossman's arguments is that Sacco must be guilty because while he was being strapped in the electric chair he did not shout: "I am innocent." Poor Sacco had been shouting his innocence for seven long years in the courts, in letters, and in conversations, but those who were determined he had to die ignored his protestations and his conclusive, un rebutted evidence that on the day of the South Braintree murders he was in Boston.

Grossman ridicules Sacco by saying that Sacco "bade farewell to his wife, children, and friends who were not there, and to his mother, who had died seven years before."

But they were there in a spiritual sense. They were the only ones he could turn to after seven years of suffering and talking to officialdom which was stone and arguing to officials who turned away. And so his last words, as the hood dropped over his head, and the cyclonic storm of 20,000 volts wrecked his heart, were: "Farewell, Mother."

Of course, it is impossible in a letter to wholly reply to Grossman's article which covered 14 pages with double columns, but I will gladly debate Mr. Grossman in any forum mutually acceptable, because those who believe in justice have the right to be informed on what ridiculous bases Mr. Grossman builds his conclusions of Sacco's guilt.

It would be dreadful for Europeans and especially the Russians to believe that in America, men may be charged, convicted, and executed on the type of presentation made by James Grossman.

MICHAEL A. MUSMANNO
Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MR. GROSSMAN writes:

The lack of judicial temperament in a judge is always to be regretted. But the fact that Judge Webster Thayer so completely lacked the temperament of a judge that he conducted the trial and subsequent proceedings unfairly, while it makes it unjust to have executed Sacco for the murder of Berardelli, does not make it improper for us to ask purely as a matter of historical fact: Did Sacco kill Berardelli?

The answer I have suggested is not the fruit—to use Judge Musmanno's expression—of that rotten and diseased tree, the trial. For I have not relied on the Commonwealth's evidence but only on post-trial proof: the Goddard comparison microscope test of Bullet III and of Fraher Shell W in 1927; the composite picture of a test shell and of Fraher Shell W, which a disinterested expert, Professor Gunther of Stevens, made in the 1930's from photomicrographs taken by the defense itself. To these I would now add the comparison microscope test made in 1961 by the experts Jury and Weller and described in Francis Russell's new book, *Tragedy in Dedham*, a compassionate, thoughtful study of the case.

These four experts who examined Fraher Shell W and the three who examined Bullet III agreed that they had been fired in Sacco's pistol. Theirs was, I believe, the only application of scientific method to the prob-

lem and was so persuasive as science that, although ballistic experts often disagree, a defense expert, Professor Gill, was actually convinced by the Goddard test. Goddard did make a mistake in a Cleveland murder and examined the wrong bullet, but the possibility of such a mix-up at the Sacco test seems to me to be eliminated by the presence there of Gill, the defense attorney Herbert Ehrmann, and others.

An error by the experts who used the comparison microscope seems to me highly unlikely. The only question is what were they looking at: the actual bullet that had killed Berardelli? or a fake fired in Sacco's pistol by the police, marked "III" by them, and substituted for the fatal bullet taken from Berardelli's body? The grosser wickedness—a faked bullet—seemed to me precluded by the less gross—the deliberately misleading opinion of Captain Proctor, the head of the State Police, who, I argued, would not have been vague but clear and positive about the bullet at the trial if his own policemen had fired it in Sacco's pistol. My assumption is considerably strengthened by new, independent evidence of the authenticity of the bullet in Francis Russell's book.

Far from limiting my account of anarchist robberies to the 1880's, I cited one that took place in Paris a little more than eight years before the South Braintree holdup of April 15, 1920 and startlingly like it in its main details. It is true that when Clement Duval, convicted of robbery, shouted, "*Vive l'anarchie*," this was before Sacco was born. But it may nevertheless help us understand why Sacco at the moment of his death cried out, "*Viva l'Anarchia*." For Duval's career is a striking instance of the extensive and lasting cultural rapports between French anarchists and Galleani's group. A eulogistic account of his life as an anarchist robber in the 1880's was written by Galleani, Sacco's and Vanzetti's leader, and published in book form in 1917 by Salsedo, their comrade. It is to refute the argument that it is impossible to think of Sacco as a thief and murderer that I have urged that the climate of opinion around him would have made the Braintree crime—if he took part in it—a revolutionary act in defense of his comrades and his cause.

One cannot state categorically that if Sacco was innocent he would surely have proclaimed it at the moment of death. This is nevertheless so much what one expects of him that Judge Musmanno, a passionate believer in his innocence, has written in *After Twelve Years* (p. 25) as if Sacco had

actually proclaimed it then: "We are innocent!" the men cried when arrested. 'We are innocent!' they shouted seven years later as the electrodes were made ready in the Death House and the state of Massachusetts prepared to pump fire into their helpless bodies."

But it was only Vanzetti who spoke of innocence in the death chamber, and it was only he who had spoken of it to Thompson six hours earlier during that last visit of which Thompson has written so movingly. Thompson asked of Vanzetti—and Vanzetti gave—his solemn reassurance of his and Sacco's innocence. Thompson spoke briefly to Sacco, but he does not report that he asked Sacco for a similar reassurance or that Sacco, who he was certain had heard his conversation with Vanzetti, offered one. Yet Louis Stark wrote in *The New York Times* that Thompson when he left said that Sacco and Vanzetti had reasserted that they were absolutely innocent. Whether Thompson misspoke or Stark misheard, does not matter; what matters is how oddly Stark's famous dispatch would have read if it had stated that only Vanzetti reasserted the men's innocence and that Sacco was silent about it.

I have read no letter of Sacco's written after his sentence on April 9, 1927 that clearly, unmistakably asserts his innocence. (An unpublished portion of one letter—to Mrs. Evans, June 28, 1927—does say of two of Sacco's and Vanzetti's opponents ". . . they wish to execute the innocent men," an impersonal oblique reference.) This almost total silence, when compared with Vanzetti's frequent, specific, emphatic statements of innocence, must have some significance. I do not argue from it that Sacco must be guilty, but only that it adds corroborative force to the chief evidence of his guilt, the post-trial ballistic tests.

Once we see him as guilty in our sense, innocent in his, we can sense the tragic dilemma which he solved in the last months of his life by his silence on his innocence. He was committed to the idea that government is inherently wicked. Hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, around the world, because of their faith in his innocence, were seeing in him an instance of government's wickedness. The great truth that so many were beginning to glimpse—that government could wickedly kill men for their opinions—could spread and flourish only by suppressing the smaller truth—that Sacco was guilty of the act with which he was charged. Sacco could not confess

without betraying his principles and his comrades, those who were his confederates, and those who believed in him.

If by Sacco's standards it was immoral for him to confess, it was also, I believe, dishonorable for him, by his standards, to lie affirmatively if no good to the cause could come of it. In the months after the sentencing on April 9 he was sure beyond doubt that Vanzetti and he were doomed, that nothing they could say would move any court, governor, or committee. And it was in these months that he seems to have ceased writing of his own innocence. He had a heritage of honor to leave, deeply spiritual advice to his children that was not to be spoiled by one false word.

This is pure hypothesis, to explain a strange refusal to assert innocence. I have stressed the letters and statements of Sacco and Vanzetti because of their inherent worth and because every one can make his own judgment on them. I suggest this unscientific test to readers of COMMENTARY: Read the letters with the assumption that the men are guilty; I believe that Vanzetti's will conflict with this assumption, Sacco's will take on a deeper meaning in the light of it and, in what he does not write, will seem at least consistent with guilt.

No one who has read of him can fail to be touched by the youthful Michael Musmanno who in those frenzied last months fought with such reckless gallantry, pleaded with such fervor, to save Sacco and Vanzetti from the electric chair. But the spirit which helped the great fight for justice for the two men seems to me to be unhelpful to a discussion that is an attempt thirty-five years after their death to get at a part of the historical truth. Those parts of Judge Musmanno's letter which seem to me to be more about me than about Sacco and Vanzetti I am leaving unanswered.

Schorer and Lewis

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While reviewing Mark Schorer's book on Sinclair Lewis in COMMENTARY ["The New Sinclair Lewis," May] Miss Ellen Moers quotes a sentence of mine: "Between Mark Schorer the cultivated literary man and Sinclair Lewis the writer of natural talent, there is a great distance. . . ." She then remarks: "Whatever malice may lie in Mr. Howe's statement, his comment states a truth about the American literary critic. . . ."

I resent this left-handed imputation of

malice, and invite Miss Moers either to substantiate or withdraw it.

Does she mean to suggest it was malicious to describe Mr. Schorer as "cultivated"? I cannot help that: he is cultivated. And if she assumes that the use of "cultivated" implies some sort of depreciation, would she trouble to say which kind?

It is all the more puzzling since she herself says pretty much what I did about the relation between Mr. Schorer and his subject. She even grants I was stating "a truth" about American critics. Is stating this public truth a sign of malice?

In any case, either she should have offered some ground for her slur at me or kept quiet. Instead, she writes as if she had some inside knowledge hidden up her sleeve which she chooses not to reveal. So let me assure the readers of COMMENTARY: the lady is wearing a sleeveless dress.

IRVING HOWE

Palo Alto, California

MISS MOERS writes:

I am delighted to learn that Mr. Howe meant no malice. His suggestion that "a great distance" separates "the cultivated literary man" from "the writer of natural talent" (with "no easy way of bridging it") struck me as such an odd idea that I wondered if Mr. Howe was being witty at the expense of (a) Mr. Schorer's own abundant fiction (with which I am unfamiliar) or (b) the current state of academic criticism.

The Cinema and Art

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Harris Dienstfrey's "The New American Cinema" [June] disturbed me. I've always regarded the articles appearing in COMMENTARY to be exceptionally well-written ones, by people who are very knowledgeable in their field. Mr. Dienstfrey's essay fails, to an embarrassing degree, to suggest either virtue.

To accept a term such as "New American Cinema" and subject to it all professional film-makers who, in some way or another, relate to low-budget films, is not only unfair but totally unperceptive. (I should like to define "professional film-maker" as one who *earns his living* from motion picture production.)

I, and many acquaintances of mine, have made, are making, and intend to go on making films which are neither of the Hollywood variety nor of the "see things as they are" school. Although I cannot put forth a

name for this group and its work, since we work and think quite independently of one another, I could point up the main distinction between *my* attitude towards films and those discussed by Mr. Dientsfrey: It is not enough to show the world as it is (how dull and pretentious!); nor is it proper to inject rancid, artificial flavoring into real situations. A personal aesthetic must be imposed upon a given subject; an aesthetic which is just as concerned with technique as it is with ideas. The most profound thoughts and sentiments are meaningless on film, I believe, unless they are transformed by the writer-director into relevant, fresh images and juxtaposed to each other with subtlety and dramatic insight. Improvised or super-controlled poses and dialogue will never do.

A motion picture should be stimulating, not enervating. Easier said than done, perhaps, but the key lies in an area not tackled by Mr. Dientsfrey—art.

WILLIAM KRONICK

Seneca Productions, Inc.
New York City

MR. DIENSTFREY writes:

I don't understand what seems to be Mr. Kronick's main point. An unprecedented amount of independent, "off-Hollywood" film-making has occurred in the past few years. The men and women producing the new pictures are not organized into one group (as I tried to make clear in my article), yet in general they have all reacted against the stylized Hollywood tradition in which the actors' make-up is no different in kind or degree than the scenery or the story. (Hollywood has other, better traditions, of course, and even this one, so far as I am concerned, is not all bad.) Most of the new films concern themselves deeply with contemporary life and especially contemporary American life, and they are variously imbued with an anarchist or revolutionary spirit. As a general name for the pictures, the "new American cinema" seemed as good as any.

Now it is true that few of the new film-makers earn their living "from motion picture production." No doubt the pictures of those who do are very different from the pictures of those who don't. But it is not true, as Mr. Kronick suggests, that the new American cinema is a hothouse of Zolaesque naturalism. I indicated that the absorption of the new pictures with the real goes so far as to touch the surreal, and that the exuberance of the movies and the emphasis in them on triumph instead of defeat trans-

form any ostensibly naturalistic tendencies they might have. In any case, Mr. Kronick's larger point here escapes me. I never said the new films were all equally good, and I tried to isolate the particular reasons of art which make one better than another. (Nor had I any intention, though Mr. Kronick implies otherwise, of leveling a general attack on Hollywood.) What Mr. Kronick more basically means to charge against me, though, I can't say.

Because so few of the new films have been exhibited popularly, this exchange (and perhaps my original article) may puzzle, or exasperate, some readers. For my part, it is precisely as an attack on a situation in which film-makers are kept from their potential audience, that I would like readers to understand both the exchange and the article.

Advertising

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

MISS AMERICA PULVERIZES PROFESSOR VAN
DEN HAAG ["What to Do About
Advertising," May]

Say!

I am wedded to each cliché
And *hate* you for trying to take them away
Pink glare is nicer than naked day;
For my soap op'ry let ESSO pay
(plus *Mademoiselle* and *Holiday*!)

Natch!

Whatever highbrow perfessers say,
Singing commercials are quite okay;
While "Offenbach's Toccata in A"
To me is simply a bale of hay.
Out of the air-waves kindly stay—
We don't need YOUR type in the USA!
Just go away!

(I regret that Miss A. did not become exposed to Prof. van den Haag's argument sooner.)

D. H. MUGRIDGE

Washington, D. C.

Campaign in Northrup

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The reappearance of Evelyn N. Rossman in the pages of COMMENTARY ["A Fund-Raiser Comes to Northrup," March] produced ambivalent feelings in this reader. Miss Rossman's observations about the Jewish community are acute enough to cause pain. That her talent remains undimmed is well illustrated by two beautifully made points in her most recent essay on

Northrup. First, she has given us a most succinct statement of the dilemma of Jewish education today when she says that "Children study for membership in a religious community that exists primarily at their level." Second, the classification of teen-age reaction to the American community I think is worthy of the best sociological reporting; everyone has met one or another of the types she lists and I, for one, cannot think of other categories.

However, I am disturbed by the attitude of extreme detachment which Miss Rossman evinces in her article. When she describes the motivations of the campaign leaders as being rooted in the insecurity of youth spent in Russia, Poland, New York, and Boston, she implies a certain equation among those widely separated geographical places. . . . This type of analysis is a slight both to America and to the Jewish community which it has produced. . . .

Apparently we are to draw the conclusion that the need for social acknowledgment exists only among East European Jews and certainly is not a necessity to the life of the writer. Nothing is said of any positive virtues that this same group may have contributed to the American or American Jewish community.

She reaches a high note of stridency in describing the desperate need for acceptance of these insecure, plaque-ridden parvenus. . . . I believe that such a characterization is narrow, unfair, and probably untrue.

A last point. I know nothing of Miss Rossman's personal philosophy (it is impossible to glean it from the article); however, she seems to betray a reliance on the "co-religionist" thesis of Jewish unity. I believe that this is the unspoken major premise of her polemic. It is difficult to conceive of a writer of Miss Rossman's sophistication being unable to grasp the fact that the essence of "Jewish Community" is not necessarily bound up exclusively with the synagogue. It is because of this assumption that she is forced to bemoan the danger that this type of fund-raising will prevent a "real acceptance of Judaism," whatever that may mean. Miss Rossman must certainly be knowledgeable enough to know that there is at least a possibility that the synagogue is an imperfect vehicle to rationalize the felt unity of the Jewish people. To criticize it on the terms which she has chosen is merely the demolition of another straw man.

HAROLD TICKTIN

Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to comment briefly on two seemingly unrelated items in the March issue. The first of these is the article by Evelyn N. Rossman, "A Fund-Raiser Comes to Northrup." I felt almost too ill to finish this story, not because of its lack of credibility, but because it caused me to relive the realities it so well recites. It is in effect a comment that could well go under the sub-heading "What Happens when the Uncivilized Devour the Uncivilized" or "Leviathan—Modern Version."

My second comment centers around the tone with which some of your "Letters to the Editor" writers address each other. I make specific reference (though not exclusively) to Harold Rosenberg's reply to Ernest van den Haag's letter on the former's article on Eichmann. Is it to assume the incorrect in suspecting that Mr. Rosenberg's article was written with at least some view toward a better and more civilized existence for all of us?

As a professor in a fine university I am acquainted with the right and need of intellectuals to speak honestly, sparing, however, not another's ideas, but the person.

Perhaps your readers might see the connection between my first and second comments.

HANS S. FALCK

Washington University
Saint Louis, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"A Fund-Raiser Comes to Northrup" leaves me vaguely troubled. Everything reported is recognizable and it is so terribly sad that the logical response must be either cynicism or withdrawal from such community organizations.

What is so troubling about this article? I am not sure—yet it leaves me with the same feeling I had when reading your recent Symposium by young Jewish intellectuals. I am troubled that in your magazine I cannot find an articulate discussion of the practice of Judaism except in terms of mysticism, nostalgia, tradition, the kind of rejection that Miss Rossman's report would lead one to. . . .

I for one would like to see such discussions on Judaism—but not limited to Zionism, tradition, or expediency. I believe you owe us the amount of discussion in the recent religious field that you have so ably given in other areas.

CHARLOTTE W. RIDGEWAY
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While accepting as a matter of course the enormous shortcomings of the American Jewish community, and particularly of the suburban type of situation which Miss Rossman writes about, I think the time has come to point to some of the signs of a new birth of creative Jewish life in America. Even in the comments about the fund-raising, COMMENTARY seems completely unaware of the new trends which have come to the fore in the past ten to twelve years, and which make many of Miss Rossman's comments seem quite outdated.

All over the country, there are congregations which have long since abandoned the high-pressure methods indicated in the article and the enormous amount of personal prestige evidenced by memorial and tribute plaques plastered on every doorway. I would venture to say that the majority of recent campaigns, certainly within the ranks of Reform congregations—of which there are over 600 today—have been conducted on voluntary levels, with no personal prestige or memorials involved, and including self-assessment programs developed at congregational meetings on a democratic and committed basis.

On the educational and cultural fronts, there is enormous room for encouragement. Adult Education programs are beginning to flourish, like the very solid, college-level course [presented by] my own Temple . . . College professors handled these courses, and 400 to 650 congregants attended each particular session.

Experiments are further going forward in the use of language labs and closed-circuit television for the teaching of a far greater degree of Hebrew fluency than any achieved outside of the all-day schools. Camp weekends, adult retreats, and day camping programs are forming an important adjunct of the educational process.

In the creative arts, in southern California alone there is an impressive list of events scheduled for this season—events serious in nature, well planned and executed, and bringing before both Jewish and non-Jewish communities internationally known figures in music, art, and dance.

In the face of the rising amount of evidence that the American Jewish community is finally beginning to come of age, and to become creative in its own right, so that it may take its place in history along with other famous Jewish communities of the past, it seems to me that there may be room

for an answer to Miss Rossman's article by someone qualified to talk in positive terms of the emerging American Jew.

HAROLD H. FRIEDMAN
Executive Director

Temple Emanuel
Beverly Hills, California

EVELYN ROSSMAN writes:

After each of the five articles about "Northrup," I received letters concerned with my "rejection" of the Jewish community. The writers invariably assume that I'm an outsider, judging unkindly, perhaps unfairly. I've received exhortations to embrace Orthodox Judaism, assuring me that I can find peace only "within the tradition." A Jesuit priest once imagined that I was ready for conversion. The articles, each written after some crisis within the town, have been called, "harsh . . . strident."

In fact, however, I've written, not out of arrogance and detachment, but out of weariness and excessive involvement. What may seem like detachment, is an affectation, like the pseudonym, necessary because I'm so close to my subject.

I've been involved with the Jewish community in Northrup for almost thirteen years. I belong to the temple I described. I even contributed to its campaign out of concern for schoolrooms which *were* necessary and for which I accepted responsibility. My children go to the school. It is very inadequate, but better schools are more than an hour away.

Harold Ticktin sees something insidious in my mentioning Russia, Poland, New York, and Boston in the same sentence. All that is meant, is that these are the places where most of the Jews in Northrup were born. The older generation *was* born in Eastern Europe and the younger, for the most part, in cities that have large Jewish populations. Their coming to Northrup is part of the exodus from the cities to suburbia, that is usual as job opportunities and income increase. The older residents who grew up in European trouble or in American depression are likely to compare the life their children lead with their own experiences and find them quite different.

Every letter, in one way or another, asks the value of telling about events that can only make the reader very uneasy. "I felt almost too ill to finish," writes Hans S. Falck. "Acute enough to cause pain," says Harold Ticktin. What do I hope to accomplish with this painful candor? Why did I choose this

form rather than a short story, or a novel? The fund-raiser, the rabbi, the parvenu leaders, could be drawn into a tale that would make Philip Roth's "Defender of the Faith" seem gentle and mild by comparison. At the moment, however, it seems less brutal and more responsible to tell as much of the truth as I can bear to write down (I too have a threshold of pain), with the hope that something might come of the provocation.

The rabbis who do not intervene or who actively encourage the kind of campaign I described may think again of their role and responsibility. The community leaders who are so dazzled by buildings that they cannot imagine their cost, both in money and human relations, may read a study in consequences. Other communities may pause, for a little, and think of Northrup before they choose a similar course.

Miss Ridgeway sees a connection between the article and the recent Symposium. There is a connection, but it is not, I think, what she implies. The Northrup pieces were written to express the views of people, who unlike the intellectuals of the symposium, are committed to Jewish life. They follow the traditions, to some degree. They are concerned with Israel and want a Jewish education for their children. They believe that Jewish education cannot be provided without schools, teachers, rabbis, and a community that will pay for them. The Northrup articles offer a progress report of a particular town's effort to live as a community. Evelyn Rossman (to some degree a fictionalized person) does not reject Jewish life. She and people like her, however, find themselves dispossessed in communities like Northrup. They don't leave, however, out of the awareness that the community is theirs, even when it is foolish. They are sad to discover that communities that were developed as an antidote to "alienation" may produce another generation of ignorant young people. Unlike the writers in the Symposium, who reject without knowing what they reject, these young people may say, "Yes I went to Hebrew school and to temple . . . and still want no part of it." Are they to blame?

Mr. Ticktin wonders whether I'm aware that the "essence of the Jewish community

is not necessarily bound up with the synagogue." I have been trying to explain, however, that in the suburban community the synagogue has made and continues to make a great effort to contain the Jewish community and to speak for it. In the *small* town, the Jews are understood to be a religious rather than a secular group and the rabbi is considered their representative. In order to take an essentially secularized group of people under its wing the synagogue becomes increasingly secularized itself. It supplants the center by running athletic and social activities. It tries to lure people from the country club by competing with country club facilities.

Miss Ridgeway would like to hear about Judaism, as it is not "limited to Zionism, tradition, or expediency." But what else could it be? Judaism is and always was theology, law, history, custom, a struggle for improvement of human beings and society, and a continuous debate about the best way to live and improve. When tradition was strong, the debate was conducted behind the protection of a *way* of living. Today, with tradition weak, the debate and struggle is exposed and may seem raw to those unaccustomed to it. But it seems wrong to be silent when there is so much to change and when it is plain that what is lacking is not vitality but direction, and a sensitivity to the consequences of words and deeds. If I do not write about the "Jewish community . . . coming of age," it is because I don't see it so in Northrup. Nothing pleases me more than to hear of communities that are finding more mature ways to live and learn.

I've been interested in the reactions within Northrup to the recent article. The town is small. Everyone knows who I am and I'm an accessible person. The phone rings all day. There are angry people who regard the piece as the work of an "informer." There are others who call to say, "It's absolutely true, but how could you do this to us, your friends and family? How could you be so detached and still belong with us?" Others call to say, "Thank you. Somebody had to say it!" For them, it serves as a purge for their own pent-up feelings. For me, the most important letters and calls are those that ask, "What should we do now? How can we make it better?"

THE PROBLEMS OF RICHARD NIXON*

D. W. Brogan

THIS IS A book of great if temporary interest, but also of permanent value. It tells us what we always want to know, some of the scuttlebutt about recent events and about some important recent events. It reveals something of the personality of an important actor on the contemporary scene. And it will have value as a *document pour servir*, as the French put it, when the curiosities and angers of recent history have lost their actuality.

It is an interesting and, in some ways, an appealing book, more appealing than moving. But it is not as good or as important a book as it might have been if it had been better planned. It is not that Mr. Nixon writes rather drably, although he does; he is defeated in part by the defective organization of his book, a defective organization arising out of bad planning, and that, in turn, due, one must presume, to the origins of the book in a set of magazine articles. For the plan is bad. The "crises" are of very unequal importance. Indeed, some of them hardly deserve to be classed as crises. The most important chapter of all deals with the campaign of 1960 with a series of crises or decisions or mistakes, but this very valuable contribution to history is not a history of a crisis.

Perhaps only the chapter dealing with President Eisenhower's heart attack is the account of a true crisis, since so much depended for the United States—and for Mr.

Nixon—on how this crisis which was, after all, President Eisenhower's health crisis, turned out. This is not a mere matter of misnomers. Mr. Nixon fits very different types of event into an artificial framework and this diminishes the historical value of these fragmentary memoirs, for that is what they are. We are told, again and again, of the physical effects of the tension of the crises on Mr. Nixon. Although Mr. Nixon has the reputation of being a "gut fighter," he obviously does not enjoy combat in the simple pugnacious way of Mr. Truman. Nor is he imperturbable in the manner of Lord Attlee. We get the picture of a man conscious of great or near-great issues at stake, of great or near-great decisions to be made, but also of a man who has had to fight hard to climb what Disraeli called the "greasy pole" of political success and also, to be fair, of a man conscious of the dangerous situation in which his country is forced to live. Mr. Nixon had to fight hard for everything he got: for his college education, for his law school education, for his first toe hold on the political ladder. And although this is not made explicit, Mr. Nixon seems to be contrasting himself not merely with a *fils à papa* like Mr. Kennedy, but with General Eisenhower who moved so smoothly up the military ladder.

It is obvious that Mr. Nixon is conscious of what is now called his "image" and resents it. It may be that he has been a victim of "Friendly's Law," laid down by Mr. Alfred Friendly of the *Washington Post*,

* A review of *Six Crises*, by Richard Nixon (Doubleday, 480 pp., \$5.95).

that public characters get like the images Herblock draws of them. And if Mr. Nixon's "five o'clock shadow" did him so much harm in the first television debate with Mr. Kennedy, it was in part because the public had been conditioned to see Mr. Nixon as Herblock and others saw him. That Mr. Nixon was not the cold-blooded, ruthless, and entirely unscrupulous careerist of legend this book makes plain. That he was often the victim of a deep prejudice that made reporters, for example, incapable of seeing him objectively is true. That many otherwise fair-minded people expected little or nothing of him and saw him in the distorted mirror of a malignant funhouse is true. That he was the victim of a great deal of word-of-mouth slander is true (although I did not hear some of the stories he reports and I was a careful observer of his campaigns in 1952, 1956, and 1960). But Mr. Nixon, in this book at any rate, never asks himself the question why it was so easy to slander him, so easy to impose on the public an unfavorable image.

It was not merely a matter of his physical appearance as contrasted with that of Mr. Kennedy. It was not merely his association with characters like Mr. Murray Chotiner. Mr. Kennedy has associated with some odd characters and if Mr. Kennedy did not profit by the atmosphere of panic embodied in the term "McCarthyism," his record of protesting against it was not very brilliant. Mr. Nixon, of course, is far too intelligent not to know that people like McCarthy and his allies were nuisances and actively harmful to the security of the United States since they distracted public attention from the facts of Soviet power outside the United States to the pursuit of more or less mythical conspiracies inside the United States. But he does not seem to realize that as he benefited—and he did—from the panic, the victims of the panic and their friends resented and did not forgive the fact that he did so benefit. The image of Mr. Nixon as a ruthless campaigner did not begin with his confrontation of Alger Hiss in 1948, but with his campaign against Jerry Voorhis in 1946 and it was continued in his campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas after the Hiss case had broken. Mr. Nixon played it rough—or his friends did—and he made enemies whom he has kept. He denies that there were two

Nixons, the old gut-fighter and the reformed politician of the campaign of 1960 and perhaps he is right; but in the Congressional campaign of 1958 he made fresh enemies—which was all the more unfortunate because the campaign failed.

It is a little odd that, as a professional, Mr. Nixon should not understand this, or at any rate discuss it in this book. One is inclined, at times, to remember the remark attributed to Mr. Truman in connection with Mr. Eisenhower's reputed sensitivity to criticism. "If he doesn't like the heat, why doesn't he stay out of the kitchen?"

It is in this connection that Mr. Nixon's organization of his book does him most disservice. Few topics are fully expounded. For example, there are only allusions to the Stevenson fund in Illinois in 1952. It was not (as is implied) a fund of the same kind as that contributed to help Mr. Nixon's political career. It may have been no better, but it was not identical. Mr. Stevenson's fund was used to augment the salaries of servants of the state of Illinois, not to aid directly in the working of the Stevenson political machine. But, of course, Mr. Nixon may say that, like Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Stevenson does not need a fund like the Nixon fund and he rightly resents the implication that only rich men should run for office since only rich men don't need outside aid in running in the great and populous states. Mr. Nixon probably has ideas on how campaigns of this kind should be financed and he rightly stresses the intolerable length of the presidential campaign of 1960. Both candidates were exhausted and punch-drunk by the time of the election and, of course, the length of the campaign adds immensely to the cost. But again Mr. Nixon does not develop this theme at adequate length. Yet his testimony to the drawbacks of the present campaign system would be of great value.

A more serious result of the artificial division of these autobiographical chapters into "crises" is the absence of any adequate discussion or any adequate narration of the character of Mr. Nixon's role as vice-president. This is the more disconcerting when we remember that one of Mr. Nixon's formal grounds of superiority to Mr. Kennedy was his alleged experience as an im-

portant executive. He may have had this experience, but it is not revealed here. He obviously resented and resents General Eisenhower's remark that it would take him a week to think of decisions in which Mr. Nixon had participated, but we should like to know what were, in his own eyes, the most important functions he performed as vice-president. We have an allusion to the number of important decisions he made as presiding officer of the Senate and a fascinating account of his role in the extremely delicate and dangerous situation in which he found himself during the three important illnesses of President Eisenhower, but we are not told nearly enough. The vice-presidency may be an admirable training ground for a President. It may be an important office in itself in modern conditions, not as empty as the first incumbent, John Adams, thought it was. But again we are given only glimpses of the Nixon view of the office or its potentialities. Here is a missed opportunity which it is to be hoped Mr. Nixon will find time to recover by writing, not necessarily for immediate publication, his views on the role of the vice-president.

He is certainly right in thinking that the present state of the law on the question of presidential disability is very unsatisfactory. The agreement between himself and President Eisenhower, since imitated by President Kennedy and Vice-President Johnson, is better than nothing. But not merely is this only a gentleman's agreement which may acquire, it is true, the force of a convention of the Constitution, but it does not deal with the question of a President going mad. It is to be hoped, though in my case the hope is faint, that Congress will do something about this. In this dangerous world, the last thing the United States can afford is doubt as to where authority lies in the American governmental system.

BUT too much time has probably been spent on what Mr. Nixon does not do in this book and too little on what he does do. For Mr. Nixon, his career as a national figure began with his role in the Hiss case. I believe that so ambitious and able a man would have fought his way to the top quite quickly but there is no doubt that his part in the Hiss case projected him on to the national stage sooner than is usual with a

freshman Congressman. On the Hiss case, he has not much that is specifically new to tell us and his narrative, although clear and free from too much moralizing, does not compare in dramatic effect either with Alistair Cooke's *A Generation on Trial* or Whittaker Chambers's *Witness*; but it is very valuable to have this inside account of the exposure of Alger Hiss seen from the point of view of a member of the committee. Mr. Nixon possibly exaggerates the degree to which "everybody" assumed the innocence of Alger Hiss. After all, the stories about him had been drifting around Washington for quite a long time. That did not prove that the stories were true, but Hiss had his enemies and the defects in the security system of the State Department were a subject of gossip in Washington. I can remember one very vehement defender of Alger Hiss who got cold feet very early as he began to make some private inquiries.

But Mr. Nixon doesn't seem to understand that it was not merely a question of the impeccable record of Alger Hiss that made people so reluctant to accept the testimony of Whittaker Chambers. It was not merely the ambiguous and ambivalent character of Chambers himself, slightly more ambiguous and ambivalent than is suggested here. It was the record of what was loosely called the "Anti-American Committee" of the House. The name of Martin Dies is not mentioned once and the name of J. Parnell Thomas is mentioned, without comment, only once. The view that "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" was widespread in Washington and bred an unhealthy skepticism about informers. There is no doubt that the Hiss case did immense damage inside the United States if only in providing the launching pad for Joe McCarthy's disastrous endeavors and I think Mr. Nixon is entitled to the credit he claims, both for courage and for perspicacity in quite quickly deciding that something serious was amiss. That this courage and intelligence paid off handsomely is neither here nor there; they might have backfired and Mr. Nixon does convey to us the degree to which he and one or two other members of the Committee were conscious of the fact that they were running very considerable political risks in pursuing the matter.

Other chapters of the book are dramatic

and well worth reading, but do not add much to our knowledge of American policy, although they do add something to our knowledge of Mr. Nixon. The South American trip with the two great ordeals of Lima and Caracas is told soberly and without grandiloquence by what it is right, in this context, to call the hero of the story. Mr. Nixon showed both courage and intelligence in handling the ugly situation created for him in Lima and Caracas by the Communists and although courage and presence of mind are not enough to establish the relationship of the United States with Latin America on a healthy basis, they help. Here Mr. Nixon deserved well of the republic. He did this in Russia too, but then and since, I have never thought that the famous "kitchen debate" with Khrushchev was as great an event as Mr. Nixon seems to think it was. It was rather what Professor Daniel Boorstin calls a "pseudo-event," one of these great and evanescent historical performances characteristic of this age of advertising. Mr. Nixon bore himself well, but that is about all one can say.

Of course and naturally, the account of the campaign of 1960 is the most interesting section of the book. Again Mr. Nixon plays his cards close to his chest. He evidently thinks that he got a raw deal from the working press as apart from the publishers. But he does not discuss the point on which Mr. Theodore White has laid so much stress, his own self-imposed isolation from the press and indeed from his own staff. Mr. Nixon points out with a certain wry humor that if a campaign succeeds hundreds of people claim to have helped it succeed. If it fails, only one person is to blame, the candidate. And certainly there was plenty of unjust and rancorous criticism of Mr. Nixon in 1960, just as there was of Governor Dewey in 1948 and most of this criticism, in each instance, was unjust. Mr. Nixon glides over the numerous technical reasons why his first debate with Senator Kennedy was so disastrous for him. He rightly stresses the fact that, although he did much better in the subsequent debates, he never recovered the lost ground, or at any rate the lost audience. And he has some sensible criticisms to make of the kind of debate that was staged in 1960, and some suggestions as to how, in the future, TV could be better used.

I suspect that, in his heart of hearts, Mr. Nixon knows that there were no "great debates" in 1960, and that both candidates, exhausted by the endless campaign and in Mr. Nixon's case handicapped by medical bad luck, were below their best form.

SINCE THIS was the closest election in American history, the drama of waiting for results does not require underlining, but Mr. Nixon's account is nevertheless dramatic and almost moving. He defends, which is surely hardly necessary, his long delay in acknowledging his defeat. We know from Mr. White that Senator Kennedy thought that Mr. Nixon was quite right to refuse to commit himself while there was still the glimmer of a chance. Mr. Nixon also defends himself against the charge brought by some rabid Republican partisans that he ought to have fought Mr. Kennedy's election on the ground that there had been ballot stuffing and other malfeasances in Illinois and elsewhere. In deciding that the United States could not afford a contested election, Mr. Nixon showed both good sense and patriotism, as he showed graceful good manners in reporting the election of his rival, his last duty as vice-president.

On the religious issue in the campaign Mr. Nixon rightly claims that his hands were clean, and he stresses the damage done by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. This was certainly a chance given to Senator Kennedy which he took up with great adroitness, as his brother did in the case of the arrest of Dr. Martin Luther King. (Whether Mr. Robert Kennedy did in fact infringe the ethics of the bar by his intervention, is much more doubtful than Mr. Nixon asserts.) I do not think that it can be doubted that his religion cost Senator Kennedy millions of votes, but it also gained him millions of votes where he needed them most, in the great industrial states. I think a Democratic candidate who was as strong as Senator Kennedy in other ways and was also a Protestant, would have won by a bigger margin; but this is guesswork and probably, for the future of religious comity in the United States, the election of Senator Kennedy was an intrinsically good thing (I believe it was a good thing for other reasons as well). Mr. Nixon cannot be expected to see it this way, and although his

account of his defeat is good-tempered, it is naturally not objective.

There is one great gap in this book. We are given a number of glimpses of the relationship between President Eisenhower and his vice-president, but all of them are tantalizing and excite appetite but don't gratify it. We are given an account, which I think reveals resentment, of General Eisenhower's hesitation when the fund charge exploded. General Eisenhower rallied around, but not very spontaneously. We are given an account of the various attempts to get rid of Mr. Nixon in 1956 and of the attempt to shift him to a cabinet office. We are given reasons why President Eisenhower did not intervene in the campaign of 1960 earlier in the day. This delay was certainly the subject of much comment in Washington at the time and the explanation given here doesn't seem totally satisfying. Mr. Nixon was in a situation of very great difficulty. He had to create an image of himself visibly distinct from that of the outgoing President and he had to capitalize on the great popularity of the outgoing President. It seemed to me—and to others—that Mr. Nixon did not get as much help from President Eisenhower as he had reason to expect. General Eisenhower had always stood above the battle in a way that working politicians found irritating or worse, and it is possible that if the President had intervened more actively or more warmly, Mr. Nixon would have made it.

THIS BOOK inspires one last reflection. Mr. Nixon's training and achievements have been entirely in the field of national politics. His training and achievement have been very real if not quite as great as he naturally thinks. Yet to make his comeback, Mr. Nixon has to venture on the quagmire of local California politics. His obvious place, it seems to a British outsider, is in the Senate and there is a danger that this talented politician will be side-tracked. The Republican party badly needs leaders of his caliber yet it may use them up. There is nothing in the American system which provides a remedy for this state of affairs, but it is a great pity all the same.

We learn that President Kennedy advised Mr. Nixon to write a book and it is a good thing that he has done so. But it is quite clear from this book that he could write a

better and more important book if he planned it better or freed himself from the strait jacket of magazine publication. Nevertheless this will do very well to go on with.

JEWISH WIT PSYCHOANALYZED

JEWISH WIT. By THEODOR REIK. *Gamut Press*. 242 pp. \$2.45.

Reviewed by MARION MAGID

IT WOULD BE ironic indeed if Jewish wit had outdistanced its persecutors for centuries, only to succumb in the end to the heavy hand of psychoanalysis. The best thing that can be said of this "pilot study" . . . "for the psychoanalytic exploration of the Jewish group" is that it does not come anywhere near reaching its goal; if it did, the joke might really be ruined for all time. By way of conclusion Dr. Reik offers several less than electrifying insights of a general nature about Jewish jokes and hazards a few Freudian guesses about the collective psyche of the Jewish people. He presents these findings in a tentative, even hesitant spirit which almost allows one to forgive him for them.

Decked out as a scientific treatise, this book is in fact a homespun medley of digressions, pep talks, and childhood recollections. The shadow of Freud looms large here, as over the rest of Reik's writings, and his tributes to the master are, as ever, poignant and slightly embarrassing. ("A few times I made him smile myself by some funny observation.") Dr. Reik's candor about his own failings is disarming, and so is his analyst's penchant for letting the reader in on his thought processes in the works. ("In the loose manner of thought associations a saying of a New York writer occurs to me . . ."). In the end one wishes Dr. Reik had stuck to his accounts of hijinks at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and citations in full from Richard Beer-Hoffmann. When he digresses from his digressions and sets out in pursuit of his elusive quarry, it is heavy going indeed.

There are the usual jokes in the usual groupings (*shadchen* jokes, *shnorrer* jokes, two-Jews-on-the-way-to-Cracow jokes, Disraeli-in-Parliament jokes) followed by exegesis. The reader follows the usual procedure of skipping the exegesis and reading

the jokes first, only to find that he has heard most of them before.

Dr. Reik is something less than a natural raconteur. To the intrinsic perils of rendering the Jewish joke in print, he adds several contributions of his own: a compulsion to explain the punch line ("the witty effect is here intensified by . . ."); a tendency to miss the point; traces of condescension to the Jew of Eastern Europe which flights of rhetoric in his behalf only compound ("... indomitable figures in kaftan, creepingly marching through the centuries . . ."). Dr. Reik labors under the common delusion that Yiddish (or, as he calls it, the "singsong of Yiddish jargon") has neither grammar nor other formal strictures of its own, and hence can be achieved by a kind of creative leap from the German. When he undertakes to render the original punch line in transliteration ("*Wir zyn zwo Spanish Granden*") the luckless reader who knows Yiddish can only cringe. A considerable number of the jokes that Reik tells make no sense at all. In these cases the reader's only recourse is to try translating the joke back into German and then once again into Yiddish. He might occasionally thereby succeed in restoring the joke to its original form—but by then he has lost the inclination to laugh. There would be no reason for belaboring this point were it not for the fact that Dr. Reik frequently undertakes to analyze the latent content of jokes whose manifest content seems to pass him by.

The formal analysis of wit—a cataloguing of its types and investigation of its techniques—is a respectable intellectual exercise; some very witty people have undertaken it. But the psychoanalysis of jokes is another story altogether: it appears to come down to an attempt to analyze the unconscious motives of the protagonists of the joke. What seems wrong with this procedure, apart from the fact that it has nothing to do with what makes the joke funny, is that it offers no intrinsic limits to speculation. To take an example cited by both Freud and Reik: Rabbi N. of Cracow is seated one day in the synagogue when he suddenly screams. The worried students cluster about him and he explains: "I just saw the Rabbi of Lemberg die." But travelers arriving the next day from Lemberg have heard nothing about their Rabbi's death. Later it is ascer-

tained that the Rabbi of Lemberg is, in fact, alive and in excellent health. A Jew from Lemberg uses the occasion to tease a disciple of the Cracow Rabbi about his master. "Your Rabbi made quite a fool of himself the other day. Our Rabbi L. is still alive." "That makes no difference," replies the disciple. "To look from Cracow to Lemberg is still a marvelous feat."

Freud cites this joke as an example of sophism: the Hasid, eager to believe at all costs in the miraculous powers of his Rabbi, refuses to readjust his beliefs and readjusts the laws of logic instead. Reik carries the analysis further: he attributes the Cracow Rabbi's telepathy to an unconscious wish for the death of his rival; then he proceeds to explain the disciple's reaction not as the comical response which it seems to be in the joke, but rather as an unconscious acknowledgement of the power of the Rabbi's "emotions and drives," powerful enough, in fact, to bring about the death of a rival. There is no possible answer to this assertion, since neither the Rabbi of Cracow nor his disciple is available for further analysis. But the question is—why stop there? Once having departed the premises of the joke itself, it seems as feasible to discuss its visual symbolism, for example (primal scene?) as the infantile omnipotence fantasies of the Cracow Rabbi. Not to mention the meaning of the continuous journeying. Or the emphasis on disputation. (Oral syndrome?) A similar case is that of Knoepfelmacher in the Viennese delicatessen. Knoepfelmacher, who has converted to Catholicism, is gripped by a sudden urge for breast of goose. "And from such a religion one converts!" he sighs. Dr. Reik has Knoepfelmacher regressing for an instant to the ur-memory, the pre-conscious identification of food and religion. But why stop at this obvious explanation? What about the primal crime against the father? Is it merely accidental that Knoepfelmacher orders goose breast and not, for example, sauerbraten?

THROUGHOUT this book Dr. Reik enjoins upon his readers the necessity for listening "with the third ear," meanwhile doing untold violence upon the other two. He is master of the not-quite-right comparison ("the playing fields of Eaton [*sic!*] and the Yeshivot of Eastern Europe"), the inap-

propriate tone, the *mot injuste*. The Jewish people are "like a jack-in-the-box . . . they can be counted, but they cannot be counted out." He opens his investigation with a query about whether the Jews are "the Shlemihls among the nations" and ends a discussion of the role of truth in Jewish humor with a rousing clincher from the Gospel according to St. John.

The book has apparently not been edited at all, leaving Dr. Reik's incredible prose style intact. There is a fresh surprise on every page. No sooner has the reader built up an immunity to the continuous present, the Germanic inversion ("Late resounds in us what early sounded") and the mangled citation ("Be Kent unmannerly when Lear is crazy") then he is faced with new challenges: "While he still lived in Germany, he identified with his Jewish friends and emigrated to America." In the end it becomes a game and there are rich incidental rewards: women who are "chase and virtuous"; a man who "spoilt his changes in life"; "the saving grave of the Jewish people." (Has no one read the gallows?)

Some of the best jokes in this book are unwitting (and not particularly Jewish). They stem from Dr. Reik's encounters with the American vernacular, through the agency of his patients who are a remarkably cliché-ridden lot. "Tell it to the marines!" says one (*Azoi redt men zu a doktor?*), and Dr. Reik wonders what the Navy has to do with it. When they are not complaining of "the white man's burden," they are pausing for station identification. The solemn analysis Dr. Reik extends to these stale locutions is incidentally funny, but it raises certain serious questions. Perhaps what disqualifies psychoanalysis as a tool for the study of wit, is that it does not acknowledge distinctions of merit between one utterance and another; the formal joke and the Oxydol commercial both well up from the unconscious and hence are equally susceptible of this method of analysis. In this book Dr. Reik does not distinguish between a good joke and a bad one, a wise-crack and a bon mot. He trains the same scrutiny on the quips of Oscar Levant as he does on the most polished epigrams of Heine. We have all been taught by now the sources from which humor stems, the aggressions it masks and the anxieties it dis-

charges. Yet this does not serve to explain why the unconscious of one man compels him toward irony and the unconscious of another toward the throwing of custard pies.

Reik offers in conclusion a fourfold summation of the characteristics of Jewish wit—having first proven its uniformity and continuity by a series of agile comparisons spanning the millennia (from "the first Yahwist commentator of 850 B.C. to George Jessel; from Ibn Ezra to Charlie Chaplin; from Shylock to Disraeli"): Jewish wit, he asserts, is intimate; it proceeds by antitheses; it makes one laugh but is not merry; it devolves upon a moment of subjective truth. Bidding us follow him then "into the dark netherworld of the unconscious," he adduces the clinical implications of these findings: "Jewish wit is an oscillation between the paranoid and the masochistic trends." Restored to the vernacular, this seems to say that Jewish wit expresses feelings both of superiority and inferiority, that it is born out of ambivalence, anxiety, and marginality. True enough, but our friends have been saying this at parties for years—and with considerably more lilt. Surely it is more meaningful to describe a masochistic character who has the strong unconscious wish to fail as a *shlemihl*, than a *shlemihl* as a masochistic character who has the strong unconscious wish to fail.

ULTIMATELY one cannot quarrel with even the most unlikely of Dr. Reik's formulations, for they do not exist in the arena of proof or disproof. Beyond pointing out that his analysis frequently wrenches the joke from its context, that it usually explains nothing about what makes it funny and could serve equally well for a news item, an editorial, or a dream, one can dissent from Dr. Reik's procedures only on grounds of taste. What this kind of analysis lacks is that peculiar sense of the apropos, the fitting, the congruent—sometimes called wit—which would have prevented him at all costs from attributing death-wishes to the Rabbi of Cracow and clan memories to Knoepfelmacher. In the end it is a matter of tact, as difficult to explain as a joke is to someone who doesn't get it. There is, finally, only one rebuttal to an analyst's discussion of Jewish humor: a book by Sholem Aleichem on psychoanalysis.

THE YOUTH FIELD

THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, November 1961 ("Teen-Age Culture," edited by JESSIE BERNARD).

DAEDALUS, Winter 1962 ("Youth: Change and Challenge," edited by STEPHEN GRAUBARD).

Reviewed by BENNETT M. BERGER

BUSINESS IS BOOMING in the study of youth. Most of the recent books and articles on youth and adolescence have addressed themselves to such practical problems as juvenile delinquency, the not-quite-delinquent "wildness" of teen-agers, the impact (or lack of impact) on students of academic values, and, somewhat more generally, the special tensions attendant upon adolescence as a "transitional stage." But beyond this concern with relatively practical problems, there lies a body of recent work whose preoccupations with youth are intended to tell us as much about adults as about children. I have in mind, for example, Edgar Friedenberg's fine book *The Vanishing Adolescent*, Paul Goodman's much discussed *Growing Up Absurd*, Kenneth Keniston's long article last year in *The American Scholar*, Eric Erikson's work on adolescence and identity, and James Coleman's carefully researched but disappointing *The Adolescent Society*. The latest additions to this literature are the two present symposia, which contain a total of 22 articles.

The major preoccupation of the contributions to *The Annals* is a quasi-ethnographic fascination with something called "the teen-age culture" or "youth culture," or sometimes "the adolescent subculture." These terms summarize the belief of many that adolescents are a species of exotica, that they move in a hedonistic, irresponsible, and "expressive" milieu, distinctive enough to qualify for the sociological classification "subculture." Adolescents, in any case, seem mysterious enough that their parents require manuals on how to understand them.

The central theme of *The Annals*, however, is that the rebellious, anti-adult, Dionysian features of "teen-age culture" have been grossly exaggerated. One article, it is true, uses teen-age magazines to document the major preoccupations of teen-agers (sex

appeal, Hollywood, TV, records, popularity, and so on) and a second discusses the spread of these motifs to Britain and the Continent. But the substance of most of the other selections suggests that the character of adolescent peer groups should not seriously obstruct young people from eventually becoming responsible adults—which is, after all, what most official worriers about youth are worrying about when they worry. For example, Kirk Dansereau sees adolescent behavior as a prototype of the adult world of the near future, in which life will be organized around leisure, not work. Again, a study of rural youth concludes that these young people are fully as traditional and conservative as their parents. Ira Reiss argues that while the sexual codes of adolescents are more liberal than traditional norms allow, for the most part they are quite in accord with the "permissiveness" that actually governs sexual behavior today. And so on. In her editorial summary of the entire issue, Jessie Bernard concludes: "The volume might well be viewed, therefore, as a picture of adult culture today as reflected in the teen-age culture which it fosters." But adults know that the distorted reflection is temporary (they'll grow out of it), and this knowledge in large measure accounts for the chuckling benignity with which many adults regard the "excesses" of adolescents. Genuine subcultures are never taken so lightly.

But if *The Annals* succeeds in making its rather bland point that the adolescent society is far from being beyond the pale of respectability, far from worshipping at the feet of Dionysius, this success ought not to deceive us into believing that "youth culture" is merely a myth. Though genuine subcultures of youth involve only minorities of young persons and, indeed, spill over the usual barriers of age-grading, they do flourish. In what is far and away the best and most interesting paper in *The Annals'* collection, David Matza introduces the idea of "subterranean tradition," which is adhered to by a small part of the population, tolerated by somewhat broader segments of it and, although officially denounced, regarded by the public "with ambivalence in the privacy of contemplation." He argues very persuasively that in the U.S. subterranean traditions of youth take three major forms—radicalism, bohemianism, and de-

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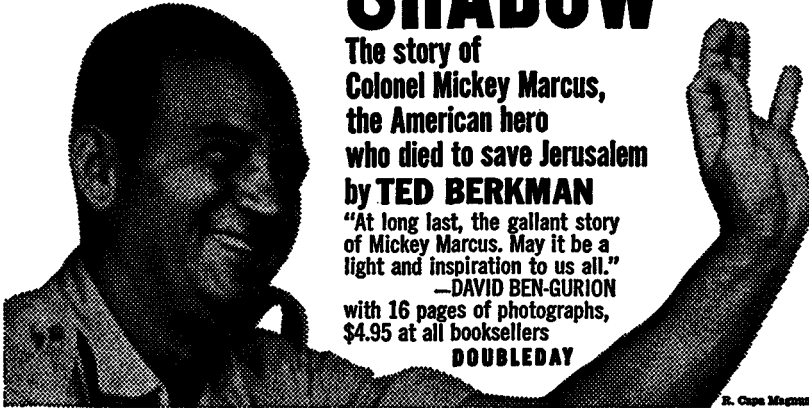
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linquency. He maintains that these rebellious traditions do not attract more young adherents than they do because each has a "conventionalized version" which serves to drain the original of its most significant content. Thus radicalism competes with the tradition of "doing good," of social reform and community service; the conventionalized version of delinquency, on the other hand, is "teen-age culture"; and certain aspects of fraternity life (though Matza admits that this is the most questionable of his parallels) provide a conventionalized version of bohemianism. If you can't squelch 'em, co-opt 'em, seems to be the great American principle of civil order.

One of the many virtues of Matza's paper is that it enables us to distinguish between the routine, ephemeral, essentially transitional features of adolescence—which can be understood as an attempt by adolescents to cope with the specific temporary pressures our system of age-grading imposes on them—and genuine subterranean (i.e. subcultural) styles—which tend to leave a relatively permanent mark on those who have been extensively involved in them. Ex-

delinquents, ex-radicals, and ex-bohemians tend to be permanently visible; ex-swooners, ex-hot-rodders, and ex-basketball players do not. I think that an important source of much of the confusion and contradictory noises one hears about youth is the failure to distinguish between youth or adolescence as a chronological age-grade with its distinctly transitional pressures and problems, and youth or "youthfulness" as a configuration of cultural qualities or psychological predispositions, which, although concentrated among the young, are neither exclusive to it nor necessarily temporary. Everybody knows (or says) that some adults are more youthful than others. What they often do not observe is that the tendency to maintain youthfulness in later years is not just randomly distributed. Certain adult milieux are especially receptive to or tolerant of hedonistic, flamboyant, irresponsible, spontaneous, and expressive kinds of behavior; and it is toward these milieux that those youngsters who have been most deeply involved in genuine "youth" cultures tend to gravitate as they get older. Some never "grow out of it," and as adults they con-

tribute to the maintenance of subterranean traditions from which succeeding generations of youth can draw sustenance.

IN *DAEDALUS*, only Bruno Bettelheim devotes his entire article to "The Problems of Generations," but it troubles virtually all the contributors. While Talcott Parsons sees traditional American values as fundamentally unchanged, and believes that youth shares in the widespread consensus regarding these values, most of the other authors are deeply concerned about "the search for identity," the conflict of generations, the difficulties of finding anything worth believing in, and the impact of accelerated social change which alienates youth both from the obsolete past and from the enigmatic, un-anticipatable future.

A schematic summary of topics like this cannot begin to do justice to the richness and complexity of the *Daedalus* discussions, which contain some of the very best thinking on youth that I have encountered. Although I do not have space to praise each of the articles individually (and all ten deserve a great deal of praise), I do not think it a quibble to point out that the *Daedalus* symposium is not, as its title suggests, about "Youth: Change and Challenge." The symposium is about elite youth, or college youth: the kind of people about whom the myth of "generations" is created. We deceive ourselves, though, if we think that our diagnoses of cultural "generations" tell us much about the actual statistical distribution of experience in age groups. "Youth" is not James Dean rebelling with plenty of cause and choking us up with poignance, just as "age" is not snow-white Robert Frost barking his eccentric wisdom to students in search of a Sage. My father was a young man in the 1920's, but he never drank bathtub gin, nor leapt into the fountain at the Plaza, nor Charlestoned to jazz, and was certainly not beautiful and gay and damned. But my bet is that his experience, such as it was, was actually more representative than that of those who captured the myth of the 20's. Culturally speaking, however, it is as if he never lived; history as myth ignores him. Until we free ourselves from this myth of homogeneous generations, we shall continue to be innocently surprised and troubled when surveys of adolescents reveal lots of

young people to be quite ordinary reflections of their parental milieu, good, pimply-faced kids with a host of ordinary problems, who'd be at home in any Y, 4-H club, or Boy Scout troop, and will later be at home in the Methodist church, the Lions Club, and the Republican party.

This, of course, may change as one moves from high school to college and beyond—bohemianism and radicalism are very rare in high schools; they begin to emerge clearly only in college and then by no means equally in every college. But what evidence there is suggests that even most elite youth move rather smoothly through their college years into lifelong commitments to family, community, and career. They do not pay terribly much conscious attention to the search for identity, which, whatever else it is, is not cause for disapprobation by intellectuals. In spite of the clinical concerns of social psychiatrists, "growing up" in our society is perceived not as the gradual development of a firm, stable ego-identity, but as a sobering process of increasing responsibility, deferred gratifications, irreversible roles, and an instrumental approach to the world. And it is this attitude which, from the point of view of a utopian or a Dionysian, renders growing up as "absurd," and which predisposes many of us to see reluctance and lack of enthusiasm among those who opt for "maturity." Thus Bettelheim:

If manhood, if the good life in the good community, is the goal of adolescence, then the goal is clear, and with it the direction and the path. But what if existing manhood is viewed as empty, static, obsolescent? Then becoming a man is death, and manhood marks the death of adolescence, not its fulfillment.

With more emotional power than either Goodman or Keniston, Bettelheim is suggesting in this passage that although puberty provides us with a good objective criterion of the beginning of adolescence, we have no objective mark of its end; "maturity" remains *essentially* a matter of opinion. Several of the *Daedalus* writers apparently agree with Dostoevsky that "to live beyond forty is bad taste." Kasper Naegle refers to the Greek wish that youth should not be spoiled by age, and Erik Erikson remarks that the cumulative experience of childhood and adolescence "bequeaths to all methodical

pursuits a quality of grandiose delusion." Under these conditions, then, growing up is indeed absurd. But *Daedalus* chickens out at the end. Having convinced us that "we" have given "them" a rotten world full of bleak prospects to grow up into, *Daedalus* turns right around and, like the forced, affirmative Hollywood ending in which the logic of dramatic necessity is blithely discarded in favor of "upbeat" requirements, recommends to the young that they carry on, *engagé*, heads high.

But if the world of youth, as so many of these writers suggest, really is a truer, wholer, more authentic kind of existence, on what basis do we recommend that it be left behind in favor of the mixed blessings of "maturity"? Because there's no choice? Because one "has to" grow up? Well, not really; one doesn't have to. Henry Miller hasn't. Bertie Russell never grew up. Ernest Hemingway didn't. Norman Mailer is probably a superior kid today to what he was in 1948. Kenneth Rexroth isn't grown up. Dylan Thomas died adolescent and so did Charlie Parker. They remain, as the song says, Like Young, and quite unlike those who drink Pepsi. I do not sentimentalize, I do not make heroes of these men, and I do not recommend to anybody their modes of staying young. But it is a fact that these lives are available as models, and plenty of young bohemians and radicals dedicate themselves in this manner to perpetual youth. And who will say that they contribute less to our civilization than the thousands who get up off the couch, bristling with ego-identity, to return, strengthened, to the grim combat of family, community, and career?

THE NEW AMERICAN HISTORIANS

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN HISTORY. Edited by JOHN HIGHAM. *Harper Torchbook*. 244 pp. \$1.60.

Reviewed by STAUGHTON LYND

THIS LOW-PRICED paperback conveniently introduces the general reader to the current shoptalk of American historians. Ten specialists discourse reflectively on such topics as "The Puritan Strain," "The Revolutionary Era," "Disunion and Reunion," "The Progressive Tradition," and "Emergence to

World Power." Each essay, in the words of the editor, "tells how a standard topic in American history was understood a generation ago and how its interpretation has altered since that time."

What use is the past? David Potter's concluding essay on "The Quest for National Character" suggests one reason for popular interest in American history. "In any deep dimension of time," Potter writes, all Americans (other than the Indians) are immigrants, and "it is, perhaps, this recency of arrival which has given to Americans a somewhat compulsive preoccupation with the question of their Americanism." As in psychotherapy an individual may rediscover a sense of himself by returning to certain forgotten experiences, so a people gropes to identify those parts of the past whereon, in the present moment, it can take its stand.

The writing of American history since World War II has been engaged in dubious battle with those authoritative figures of the previous generation who interpreted American history as a continuous conflict, essentially economic, between "the people" and an exploitative minority. Turner, Beard, Becker, and Parrington were the giants whose reading of history was itself a facet of the Progressive movement.

Revisionism, as the questioning of this Progressive reading of the past has been called, has produced a crop of counterpropositions. We are now invited to regard the Puritans as humane intellectuals; the American Revolution as the defense of previously achieved political rights; Jacksonian Democracy as the urge toward achievement of acquisitive entrepreneurs; the Civil War as a needless blood-bath caused by fanatic agitators, particularly of the North; the robber barons as industrial statesmen; the Populists as paranoid racists, and the Progressives as rhetorical moralists fearful of losing status; and Wilsonian idealism, finally, as soft-minded ignorance of the power realities of international affairs. *The Reconstruction of American History* is the first comprehensive attempt to assess these revisions against the background of the older historiography.

The authors of these essays would be the first to admit that no over-all synthesis has been produced, comparable to the Progressive interpretation, to bind together the dis-

parate revisionist critiques. Indeed one of the implicit themes of the book is the difficulty of writing history without some theory of how society hangs together and how social change takes place. "The third generation of professional historians," writes editor Higham, "has largely given up its predecessor's belief in the preponderance of material forces in history. We have no alternative theory of causation." John William Ward comments: "What students of the American past mostly need at present is a self-conscious theory of culture which will enable them to win their way through to a description of the patterns that give coherence to particular events." "A coherent history of the working class," Rowland Berthoff concludes, "still awaits a coherent history of the larger American social structure." These are, it would seem, historians in search of a theory.

Contrary to Higham, the recent work described by these essays appears to confirm an economic interpretation of history as much as to dislodge it. Consider the matter of Jacksonian Democracy. Progressive historians, down to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., tended to idealize the Democratic party of the 1830's. Revisionists counter with the assertion that the movement sought freedom for the entrepreneur more than equality for the common man. But who originated this conception of a "petty-bourgeois" Age of Jackson? As Ward tells us, it was the socialist Algie M. Simons who, in his *Social Forces in American History* (1911), stated that "the rampant individualism of young competitive capitalism determined the *Zeitgeist* of the period." Or glance at the new reinterpretation of Progressivism itself. Who first anticipated the critical tone of historians like Richard Hofstadter? Arthur Mann, in his essay "The Progressive Tradition," says that it was H. L. Mencken, Lincoln Steffens, and John Chamberlain in the late 20's and early 30's, the latter two, of course, writing from the standpoint of a conversion to Marxism.

What these observations point toward is the possibility that what revisionism has undermined is not all economic interpretation of the American past, but a particular, somewhat simple-minded economic interpretation associated with Progressivism. After all, the most famous work of the older school pro-

fessed to be not *the* economic interpretation of the United States Constitution, but *an* economic interpretation. One might almost argue that what revisionism has weeded out of Progressive history is not its emphasis on economics, but its uncritical sentimentality about individuals like Jackson and movements like Populism.

CERTAINLY ONE feature of a more sophisticated economic interpretation would be the attempt to place American history more firmly in the framework of European and world history. As Ernest May observes in his account of "Emergence to World Power," there has been a connection in the writing of American history between parochialism and moralism: "those historians who concerned themselves exclusively with American events tended also to be those who were on the hunt for villains." The tendency of the Progressive historians to see the clash of classes as a contest of good with evil was related to their tendency to see the American experience, by virtue (for instance) of the influence of the frontier, as exceptional and unique. There has not yet been a solid comparative study of the American and the great European revolutions, still less of the American Revolution and colonial independence movements of the 20th century.

Sophistication, however, need not entail abandonment of the Progressives' moral commitment. David Potter, in his essay concluding *The Reconstruction of American History*, finds the key to American character neither in individualism nor in conformity, but in the passion for equality. One defect of the Progressive mind was its indifference to the plight of the American Negro, an indifference in some cases amounting to explicit racism. Today's American historian, with a deeper commitment to equality, will be able to view the American story through the eyes of its perennial victims. He will thereby be capable of "viewing occurrences from more than one perspective," in Ernest May's words, which makes for objectivity.

Such an approach—basically economic, but more cosmopolitan, and more able to enter imaginatively into the experience of different groups, than the Progressive view—might produce some exciting history. It might also enable American historians to fulfill the higher function of grappling with

the future as well as echoing the past. One contributor to the present volume makes the depressing generalization that trends of historical interpretation tend to lag after trends of history itself, so that "the historian steps in after a movement or a process peters out." Need it be so? May poets anticipate history, but historians merely copy it? All history is selective, but it would be an interesting adventure to attempt to select on the basis of what seems likely to matter ten or fifteen years from now.

I believe that such an anticipatory history would find itself synthesizing the massive contribution of the Progressive historians with the refinements proposed by their critics. It would agree with William Miller, in his essay on "The Realm of Wealth," that "the Progressive indictment [of the Rockefellers, Carnegies, and Morgans] survives in the general history books because it is a true bill." It would concur with Walter Lippmann's assertion in *Drift and Mastery*, quoted by Miller, that "no one, unafflicted by invincible ignorance, desires to preserve our economic system in its existing form." And it would go on from there.

A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION CIRCA 1956

LETTING GO. By PHILIP ROTH. *Random House*. 630 pp. \$5.95.

Reviewed by IRVING FELDMAN

YOUNG MEN MUST grow up, must lose their illusions about themselves and their circumstances. Set on the anvil of reality, they will have to bear up under an indictment like that made by the father in Kafka's "The Judgment": "So now you know what else there was in the world besides yourself! An innocent child, yes, that you were, truly, but still more truly you have been a devilish human being!" And they will not leave the anvil until a death—that of a father or a child—has purchased their release. Such is the sentimental education through which Philip Roth conducts the two heroes of his long, uneven novel, *Letting Go*. They meet as graduate students, pursue their difficult friendship—one is married, grindingly poor, and dedicated to a life of stingy self-sacrifice, the other is at loose ends—and

finally separate five years later as teachers.

"Devilish," however, is not quite the word for Gabe Wallach and Paul Herz, Roth's two unhappy young men, for their sins are, typically, those of omission, of failure. Rather, *Letting Go* seems to be patterned—not intentionally, so far as I know, but perhaps inevitably—on Flaubert's masterpiece of boredom, failure, and waste, *A Sentimental Education*. The comparison is, I think, worth pursuing. In both works the author wields the birch of bitter reality with harsh and depressing regularity on the backs of his heroes. In both, the twin heroes complement one another, though, characteristically, they are scaled down in the Roth novel. Gabe Wallach is a butterfly of sentiment, though without the strong romantic appetite of Frederic Moreau, his counterpart; he is, we are given to understand, always playing it safe, risking little in order to lose little; half-heartedly available, merely amenable, he has no clear idea of what he wants or of what others expect of him; his sentiments are, in fact, notably weak, he never gets behind on grading papers. Paul Herz, on the other hand, is a mole of duty where Flaubert's Deslauriers is a man of action, though of petty and blundering action. And there are a number of other resemblances, in the class backgrounds of these pairs, in the kinds of women who are available or not available to them, etc. What is more important is the similar disillusionment from which both novels spring. Flaubert wrote *Sentimental Education* in the 1860's looking back, under Louis Napoleon, on the betrayed hopes of the 1848 Revolution. And the broad subject of *Letting Go*, which begins at the end of the Korean War and concludes with the Recession of 1957, is the underlying hopelessness of the Eisenhower era.

This, I think, is at the heart of the reductions of *Letting Go*, it is what makes the man of feeling half-hearted and the man of duty torment and squander himself. Much of this is clearly calculated. The impoverished Paul Herz has, on first view, "the look about him of a dissatisfied civil servant, the product of some nineteenth-century Russian imagination." Yet he turns out to be not at all the Alienated Man of the 40's—he has gone "underground" not to subvert but to bear the world on his back. An industrious pursuer of scholarships, diligent at unhappi-

ness, and something of a mama's boy. Like Gabe Wallach, he is a man of good will who succeeds only in acting in bad faith. Both, moreover, are arrayed against the background of their romantic elders: Gabe's father, Wallaceite, Reichian, yoga-ist, the romantic of health; Paul's Uncle Jerry, the romantic of (psychoanalytic) love; his Uncle Asher (who with his slangy, erudite, break-neck speling is clearly meant to be Augie March at 50), the romantic of Bellovian (or Gidean) availability to experience; and, finally, Paul's father, the four-time failure, the romantic of business. Indeed, they are all failures—the health-maniac is terrified of his loneliness, the middle-aged lover is twice divorced, the bohemian Asher is a painter of buckeyes. Each of these paths is marked No Exit. And, generally, the past provides no issue for these young men; they are tethered to a sense of the limitations of their moral and biological inheritance, and even the children they must care for (or destroy) have been fathered by other men.

What, then, remains open to them? The future, except for the needle's eye of failure, is also closed. Unlike Flaubert's young men, they have no ambitions (except for a quite vague decency and happiness) and no careers. We are told that one is a writer and the other a scholar and that both are teachers, but, aside from some literary chitchat and some slight satire on academic types, we have no sense that they have any work. (Indeed, their work is so unimportant to Roth that he has implausibly made Herz the writer and Wallach the scholar, where the reverse would have been more plausible.) What, after all, are they doing in this world? And, amazingly, they have no contemporaries, no friends, no connection, that is, with the world at large; they have only their elders and their women and can measure themselves only against the demands made on them by their parents and their women. Let me give an example. The high point of Gabe Wallach's affair with the woman available to him comes at the onset of a brief illness. After two days of fever and sex he wakes up still ill but happy and convalescent. This is a characteristic moment—the passions have been exhausted and the world can be freely encountered. So, in *Sentimental Education*, Frederic Moreau finally gets a woman into bed. Unhappily, it is a courtesan

who has come to the bed he had prepared for the woman he desires but can't have. Nevertheless, he is awakened at dawn by the sound of musketry and goes out into the streets of a Paris excited with its freedom. It is 1848! And Gabe? He listens to the old soap operas.

Yes, there harassing the air waves were those same luckless couples who had struggled through my childhood . . . and who turned out to be struggling still. And recovering from a minor ailment, I discovered . . . reading in today's newspaper what the temperature had been the day before in all the major cities of the world, poring over the woman's page and racing results with little foothold in either world—it was all as cocoonish and heart-warming on the south side of Chicago as it had been fifteen years before on the west side of New York.

It is December 1956 and there are no more revolutions, not even in Hungary. There is no world, only yesterday's trivia and the balm of Pig Heaven. It is a sad sad fact, Roth's young men have only private lives.

AND YET IT seems to me that Roth is writing as much *out* of this wretched privacy as *about* it, for he seems to regard these exclusions of friendship and work, this public vacuum, as being serious, ultimate. Hence, the tedious earnestness with which he straps his young men to the problems of commitment to wife and family. Hence, for all the liveliness of much of the writing, the novel's cramped and fetid air. Everything takes place indoors, in apartments, in offices, in cars, in stores. The novel has only one public event, which is so cluttered with literary furniture that I wonder whether Roth himself clearly sees its significance. Paul Herz is returning to attend his dying father whom he has not seen since he had been turned out of the house for marrying a *shiksa*. He examines his life:

It occurred to him now . . . that, no, he was not a man of feeling; it occurred to him that if he was anything at all it was a man of duty. And that when his two selves had become confused—one self, one invention—when he had felt it his duty to be feeling, that then his heart had been a stone, and his will, instead of turning out toward action, had remained a presence

in his body, a concrete setting for the rock of his heart.

However, he resists seeing his father until, at the last moment, he rushes alone to his funeral. There, in the cemetery, all the people from his past are assembled:

No one moved, just himself, and what rushed to meet him: a figure in black. And now at last he saw who that was too, yes, and now he closed his eyes and opened his arms and what he saw next was his life—he saw it for the sacrifice it was. Isaac under the knife, Abraham wielding it. *Both!* While his mother kissed his neck and moaned his name, he saw his place in the world. Yes. And the world itself—without admiration, without pity. Yes! Oh yes! What he saw filled him for a moment with strength. . . . He kissed nothing—only held out his arms, open, and stood still at last, momentarily at rest in the center of the storm through which he had been traveling all these years. For his truth was revealed to him, his final premise melted away. What he had taken for order was chaos. Justice was an illusion. Abraham and Isaac were one.

The text is from Kierkegaard, Paul's gesture and vision from Camus, there is perhaps a little Sartre, and, certainly, a lot of "Seize the Day." But the Absurd here seems to me quite beside the point and helps make this passage shrill and unconvincing. The healing, the joining of the man of duty (Abraham) and of feeling (Isaac) can take place because the funeral is a public event.

Roth's moral vocabulary is similarly contemporary: don't clutch, don't push and pull, and let go—that is, fail, in order to seize the day. And he is unremitting in dogging Herz and Wallach through their failures to a final tentative generosity opposed to the self-consciousness implicit in their difficulties of "feeling." But that one can win only by losing—perhaps this is the sentimentality of disillusionment. So, Gabe Wallach succeeds in saving the Herzes' adopted child for them only when he collapses before his intractable adversary. But it may be that the angel presents himself for the wrestling match precisely to those who will triumph over him. Why, in seeking to engage his characters, should Roth put it that freedom comes from responsibility and not responsibility from freedom? Maybe the answer is,

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1956: Only careers in domesticity open to talent. Similarly, *Letting Go* shows a healthy but constricting determination to avoid the other current sentimentalities—of individualism, of love, of identity-finding, of availability. But, then, what excitement and openness has life to offer in 1956? or in 1962? I recall that Flaubert, in the midst of his dour and unrelenting realism, gives Frederic Moreau a wonderfully magical love idyll at Fontainebleau. He is still with the wrong woman, but such is the power of "love and Nature the eternal"! Gabe Wallach's convalescence from the flu also has some magical qualities. It's the fever. Anti-heroism is fine—when done on a large enough scale.

What seems to me the best thing in the novel comes where Roth exceeds this scale. It is an awkward thing but a pleasure to see in a writer who has won acclaim for being fresh, bright, sharp-sighted, and winning, as Roth has. I am thinking of Paul Herz who, portrayed out of a venomous hatred, heavy and ugly at the beginning of the novel and comically predictable at its end, is often a memorable and powerfully drawn figure, though perhaps less a character than a portmanteau of insights. Gabe Wallach, on the other hand, is as absent and incredible a character as Neil Klugman of "Goodbye,

Columbus." Since he is the narrator of about half the novel, this is a major misfortune. He is not a character, but a position: Central Park West, third-generation Jewish, Harvard, Henry James scholar, handsome, healthy, charming, cautious, gently guilty about his good fortune, wantless, sniffish, but not convincingly any of these. He is intended to be a sort of blank, the starved soul of the 50's, and a blank is all I get. He is outfitted, too, with a sodden, adenoidal prose (Harvard, I guess) that only quickens for some of Roth's satirical interludes (the one on the pure Brooklyn couple, Maur and Dor Horvitz, is particularly good). It is clear that Wallach's agreeableness is to be taken as a weakness, but when he is being agreeable he is just not interesting. I suppose it must be very difficult to put such a character at the center of a novel. I don't think Roth has brought it off. Given such a narrator and Roth's penchant for demonstrating everything and for showing off his fine ear for dialogue, of which there are a number of long, trivial, and distractingly colloquial tracts, it is no wonder that much of the last third of *Letting Go* should read like one of those heavy tomes with which women often carry on protracted affairs and which are called best sellers.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

D. W. BROGAN, is the well-known Cambridge historian and author.

MARION MAGID is a new contributor who also has written for *Midstream*.

BENNETT M. BERGER, another new reviewer, is the author of *Working-Class Suburbs* and a

member of the sociology department at Illinois.

STAUGHTON LYND, a frequent contributor, teaches history at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia.

IRVING FELDMAN's volume of poetry, *Works and Days*, was reviewed in our July number.

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